

Sense of cultural identity in Shinkoku, Kōkoku, and Bukoku thoughts in the Edo period

The case of Yamaga Sokō and Buyō Inshi

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Abbreviations:

The names of schools are capitalised, not italicised; for example, Kokugaku, Heigaku, Mitogaku. Japanese words are written in italics and with macron with the exception of words that have become familiar in English. For example: shogun, daimyo.

The following abbreviations are used in the notes throughout the paper:

NST	<i>Nihon Shisō Taikei</i>
STK	<i>Shintō Taikei</i>
SKR	<i>Seji Kenbunroku</i>
SJT	<i>Sources of Japanese Traditions</i>

Contents:

Acknowledgements and abbreviations	3
Chapter 1: Introduction	7
The purpose of this study	8
Main Sources and Scope	9
Method and Structure	11
Chapter 2: Theory and definitions	13
Definition of main terms	13
Nation and Community	14
Cultural Identity and Myths	17
Chapter 3: The conception of Shinkoku, Bukoku, and Kōkoku	19
Shinkoku 神国	19
The origin of Shinkoku	19
The differences between medieval and Edo Shinkoku	21
Bukoku 武国	22
The mythical foundation of Bukoku	22
The development of the Bukoku concept	23
Kōkoku 皇国	26
Chapter 4: Yamaga Sokō	29
The life of Yamaga Sokō	29
Sokō and Japan as a divine land	31
The importance of <i>bu</i> 武	36
Sokō's thought compared with <i>tendō</i> rhetoric	38
Chapter 5: Buyō Inshi	41
Historical background	41
Japan as Shinkoku and the decline of the golden age	45

The Martial Way and the Way of Heaven	46
Buyō compared with Hirata Atsutane	53
Chapter 6: Conclusion	55
Bibliography	59

Chapter 1: Introduction

In the Edo period (1600-1868), there was an increase in people who started to question what it meant to be Japanese. A sense of self-awareness of being “Japanese” can be found in “Shinkoku thought” 神国思想 from this period. The word “Shinkoku” can be translated as “the land of the kami/gods” or “Divine Land”. The concept of Shinkoku was rather vague, meaning simply that “Japan is the country protected by the kami”, and this allowed for different interpretations ranging from a simple religious belief in divine protection, to a political body of thought related to the imperial throne. In regard to “Shinkoku thought” we have two other discourses. Alongside with the notion of Japan as Kōkoku 皇国 (“Imperial Country”) in which the uninterrupted imperial bloodline that goes back to the time of the kami was the main driving force, we find the Bukoku 武国 (“Martial Country”) discourse in which Japan’s martial power makes Japan superior to other countries.

The Kōkoku discourse has mainly been represented by Kokugaku 国学 (Japanese learning¹) scholars. Kokugaku is a term attributed, mostly with hindsight, to the studies of Japanese literature, poetry, religion, and history in the Edo-period. It was a field of study that grew popular in the second half of the Edo period. Where the Confucian scholars looked to China with admiration, Kokugaku scholars looked for what was originally Japanese before the arrival of Confucianism and Buddhism from the mainland. By studying ancient texts they sought to gain insight into a unique and ancient “Japanese way,” the way people used to live before the teachings from the mainland arrived. The religious aspects of Kokugaku teachings were derived from myths about the creation of Japan by the gods Izanagi-no-mikoto and Izanami-no-mikoto,² and about the first human emperor Jinmu 神武 who was the descendent of Amaterasu 天照, the Sun-goddess. Along with these myths, we also find writings about Japan being Shinkoku, and

¹ I use the translation “Japanese learning” instead of the more literal translation “national learning” because it makes a clearer contrast with “Chinese learning” (Kangaku 漢学). Another name for “Japanese learning” is Wagaku 和学.

² Several combinations of Chinese characters have been used for Izanagi and Izanami in different sources. The two most frequently seen writings are 伊弉諾 and 伊邪那岐 for Izanagi, and 伊弉冉 and 伊邪那美 for Izanami.

altogether these myths form the basis of the notion that Japan, being the “Imperial country”, is superior to other countries.

The notion of Japan as Bukoku was based on the fact that the country was run by the military, and this was considered to be a far more stable system compared to China and Korea.³ According to this notion, in China and Korea the civil officials were the rulers functioning as senior to the military. It was believed that in Japan the country was more stable both to internal and external threats because it was governed by martial power.⁴ This view was usually represented by the samurai-class.

The purpose of the study

The aim of my paper is to demonstrate two different views on Japanese identity that are found in the notions of Japan as Bukoku and Kōkoku. By analyzing two different texts, one from the late 17th century, and the other from the early 19th century, I will set forth the diversity of the sense of identity. The reason for my selection of two scholars that lived in different period is to show: that there were thoughts which are usually associated with the 19th century prominent in the late 17th century, and that rhetoric usually thought to have been dominant mainly in the 17th century still had a large influence on the thoughts of a group of common samurai in the early 19th century. The two scholars are both from the samurai class, but of different rank. Yamaga Sokō 山鹿素行 was a famous teacher with high stipend as well as a *rōnin* of high civil and martial education. Buyō Inshi 武陽隱士, on the other hand, was probably a low-rank samurai who did not have a formal academic education. What struck me the first time I encountered the texts by the two authors was their strong similarities to ideologies and ideas which were popular much later or earlier than their own time. Sokō’s emphasis on the emperor and the importance of revering and being loyal to the imperial court has resemblance with that of later Edo texts written by Kokugaku and Mitogaku⁵ scholars. Buyō speaks of *tendō* 天道 (the “Way of Heaven”) and *budō* 武道 (the “martial Way”) on many occasions, and his opinion displays many similar points with

³ Maeda, 2006: 107

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ For an introduction to Mitogaku see the Kōkoku part of Chapter 3.

Bukoku and *tendō* followers from the 17th century. It implies that there were several intellectual layers that differ from what has been accepted as the mainstream in the Japanese history of idea, in particular in the Edo-period.

Few studies on Kōkoku and Bukoku in Western scholarship have been done as far as I know. Therefore, I believe this comparative study of Shinkoku, Kōkoku, and Bukoku will be of value for future studies by providing an introduction to these discourses and bringing how they relate to each other to light.

Main Sources and Scope

My study is based on two primary sources: *Chūchō jijitsu* 中朝事実 (“Actual facts about the Central realm”) by Yamaga Sokō, and *Seji kenbunroku* 世事見聞録 (“A witness account of matters in the world”) by Buyō Inshi. What makes Yamaga Sokō’s account interesting is the fact that his ideas are analogous to those of Kokugaku scholars from several decades later. Then we have Buyō Inshi who is still a hard core Bukoku man at a time when the gravity of the emperor had begun to spread and was increasing in popularity. Another factor that makes this investigation notable is that general scholarship in Japanese studies may have an impression that Bukoku came first and was later replaced by Kōkoku, but the texts I have studied set forth Kōkoku in the 17th century and Bukoku in the 19th century.

Considering that Sokō was a famous *rōnin* and also the fact that he was the one who first developed a sophisticated theory of *shidō* 士道,⁶ the samurai’s way of conduct, one might expect that he would resemble more a pure Bukoku follower. Sokō’s *Chūchō jijitsu* written in 1669 is based on old history and myths of Japan. It speaks of the Age of the kami (*kamiyo* 神代), often referring to mythology from *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀, and how Japan was created by the kami. It also expounds why Japan is superior to other countries. The uninterrupted imperial bloodline that goes back all the way to the divine age, and the superior climate are the main arguments which justify Japanese superiority. The imperial bloodline is one of the main issues discussed in the Kōkoku discourse on Japan as Shinkoku. Still emphasis on values related to *budō* 武道 (the

⁶ Now commonly known as *Bushidō* 武士道.

martial Way) is constant throughout the text. Martial values are attributed to several of the old myths by Sokō. For instance, the myth of the creation of the world, and the story of the Sun Goddess and the Storm God are served as examples to describe how the martial culture of Japan can be traced to the time of the kami. It is also suggested that the kami deliberately taught mankind the necessity of the martial arts. In Bukoku thought the stability of the rule by martial authority is one of the main arguments. Sokō connects it to the other ideas from Kōkoku thought in an elegant way, as we will see in the fourth chapter. My focus is mainly on *Chūchō jijitsu*, but I will on several occasions include references from other works by Sokō in order to interpret his view on especially the warrior class and the emperor.

Buyō Inshi was a samurai (possibly a *rōnin*) from Edo whose real identity remains unknown. What we know about Buyō is what he writes about himself in *Seji kenbunroku*. In *Seji kenbunroku*, which was probably written in 1816, Buyō accounts for what he witnessed in the society as well as his critique on it. He also writes his opinion on the idea of Japan as Shinkoku. In the early 19th century, as Buyō himself mentions, the social problems were many. One might assume that Buyō's thought would be situated in the same category of ideas as other contemporaries' following the ideas of a superior emperor as descendent from the kami. However, despite of living in a time when the imperial court was emerging on the public stage, Buyō maintains a more traditional Bukoku view, and it makes him worth being studied and compared with Sokō.

Buyō expresses his thoughts on Japan as a Land of the kami in chapter called *Nihon Shinkoku to iu koto* ("On Japan being called a Divine Land") and it is my main focus in the fifth chapter. Much had taken place socially and politically since the time Sokō wrote *Chūchō jijitsu*. Nonetheless, Buyō's Bukoku view seems scarcely affected by popular trends and new thoughts. Emperor-centered ideas, for instance, have little or no influence on Buyō. Tokugawa Ieyasu 徳川家康 (1542-1616), the first shogun of the Edo-period, is held in great respect by Buyō for establishing peace and acting in accordance with the martial Way without being corrupted by selfishness or foreign teachings. The highest authority in Buyō's view was the Way of Heaven (*tendō* 天道), and it is the rulers' obligation to act in conformity with the will of Heaven. If the rulers did not follow *tendō* they would receive Heaven's punishment and their rule would end. *Tendō* (Ch: *tiandao*) was an old Chinese concept from ancient times. It came to Japan together

with the classics in which it was used. The term appeared for the first time in Japanese texts in the 8th century, but did not play an important role in the history of ideas until the 17th century.⁷ In this period *tendō* rhetoric was often applied to legitimise the sovereign power of the Tokugawa family. Buyō's account shows how the *tendō* concept still played an important part as late as in the early 19th century.

Method and Structure

Firstly, in the second chapter I will provide definitions of terms and concepts that I use throughout this paper. Can the notions of Japanese superiority that we find in Shinkoku, Bukoku, and Kōkoku thoughts be defined as “nationalism”, and can we discuss national identity before the modern “nation” was invented? Here the issues on how to define Japan as a country and the inhabitants' sense of identity in the Edo-period will also be discussed.

The conceptualisation of Shinkoku, Kōkoku, and Bukoku is quite complicated and accordingly, it deserves further explanation. The third chapter is dedicated to an introduction to the origins of the three discourses as well as the main features of their development.

My approach to investigate the texts by Sokō and Buyō is through textual analysis in order to find how their thoughts relate to the Kōkoku and Bukoku discourses. The topics focused on are their views on Japan as a Divine Land, on the emperor and the shogun, and on Japan's uniqueness and sovereignty. Chapters four and five are dedicated to a textual analysis of *Chūchō jijitsu* and *Seji kenbunroku* respectively. On the part on Sokō, I will first provide a short biography of Sokō. Subsequently, I will inquire into his writings basically using my own translations of the primary sources for the research. In the last part of the chapter, I will conduct a comparison of Sokō's thought and the Tendō rhetoric that was popular at that time. In the chapter on Buyō, I will start by giving a summary of the historical and political events that occurred after Sokō's time. Secondly, I will investigate the chapter called *Nihon Shinkoku to iu koto*.⁸ For this task I refer to Kate W. Nakai's translation of the text. Finally, I will compare Buyō's account with Buyō's contemporary Kokugaku scholar Hirata Atsutane.

In the conclusion I will draw a comparison between the views of Sokō and Buyō, and see how they relate to Shinkoku, Kōkoku, and Bukoku thoughts.

⁷ SJT: 70-71

⁸ I would like to express my gratitude to Kate W. Nakai for kindly providing me with her translation of this chapter.

Chapter 2: Theory and definitions

In this chapter I will explain the main terms that need to be comprehended in order to understand the theoretical background of my thesis. As the aim of the paper is to analyse and compare two kinds of early modern Japanese identity, I will discuss and find a suitable definition for the sense of identities.

Definition of main terms

In order to clearly distinguish the early modern era in Japanese history, I will apply Maeda Tsutomu's periodization which extends from the period of Azuchi Momoyama 安土桃山 (1568-1603) to Edo 江戸 (1603-1868). For designating the era of the Nation-State which was built after the Meiji restoration in 1868, I will apply the term "modern period."⁹

I will use the term Kokugaku 国学 as it is, and Kokugaku scholar(s) for the Japanese term kokugakusha 国学者. In the scholarship of Japanese Studies, the English term "nativism" has frequently been applied to Kokugaku. It has usually been defined as "the ambition to revive or perpetuate aspects of indigenous culture in response to a perceived threat from other cultures."¹⁰ However, some scholars have shown the variety of the nature of Kokugaku. As is clearly shown in Susan L. Burns' *Before the Nation* (2003), Kokugaku scholars' thoughts on Japanese community were much more diverse than at large argued in preexisting researches, and not all of the views are suitable to be entitled "nativism". Therefore, I find it more accurate to refer to Kokugaku using the Japanese term.

In this paper I speak of Shinkoku, Kōkoku, and Bukoku thoughts as discourses. To make clear what it implies I will explain my usage of the term. A discourse is related to both language and its specific role in history. When reading a text, instead of reading "inwards" into the core to find the meaning of it, we read "outwards" to find how it relates to other texts, how it belongs

⁹ Maeda, 2006: 9

¹⁰ Teeuwen, 2006: 227

to a certain discourse and not another, and what kind of institutional frame it belongs to.¹¹ In a discourse a set of ideas are intertwined, and by mentioning one of them, naturally other ideas in the same discourse will come to one's mind. In the case of the Kōkoku discourse, if we heard or read "the uninterrupted imperial bloodline" we would naturally also think of the other ideas related to the discourse, for example the "Age of the kami" and the emperor being the descendent from the kami etc..

Nation and community

It is generally said that the national identity of being "Japanese" and the national awareness underlying a nation-state were triggered in the middle of the 19th century by the so-called "impact from the West".¹² This was also the common recognition of people from the Meiji-period who tried to establish a new nation-state while simultaneously opposing the Western superpowers at the same time. Before then, the people's sense of group identity was limited to that of their domain (*han* 藩) and social class.¹³

As Maeda points out, there is no doubt that the external danger by the arrival Commodore Perry's fleet provided an opportunity for a new sense of belonging called "Japanese" to emerge. However, it is unlikely that a sense of a "nation" could emerge only due to such external factors.¹⁴ In his book, Maeda demonstrates how the sense of identity of being Japanese appeared and developed before the impact from the West. The most representative in trying to find a Japanese identity were the Kokugaku scholars who searched for the supremacy of Japan in history and myths.¹⁵ They have usually been considered the most representative group of Kōkoku thought.

Would it be appropriate to apply the term "national identity" to describe the sense of identity found in the early modern period? To answer this question we must first take a look at what a nation is. While a standard dictionary definition is "a country considered as a group of people with the same language, culture and history, who live in a particular area under one government" (Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary), many scholars specialising in national

¹¹ Jordheim, 2001: 282

¹² Maeda 2006: 9-10

¹³ 士農工商 *shinōkōshō*, "warrior, peasant, artisan, and merchant".

¹⁴ Maeda 2006: 10-11

¹⁵ Ibid.: 37

identity and nationalism have coined different definitions. In order to show the diversity of the interpretations of nation, I will review a few of the popular definitions.

In recent scholarship “nation” is usually seen as a modern conception. The common modernist approach to defining “nation” implies that it is a product of modernization.¹⁶ The definition given by Ernest Gellner is: “two men are of the same nation if and only if they share the same culture, where culture in turn means a system of ideas and signs and associations and ways of behaving and communicating” and if they “recognize each other as belonging to the same nation.” He continues to write: “nations are the artefacts of men’s convictions and loyalties and solidarities. A mere category of persons (say, occupants of a given territory, or speakers of a given language, for example) becomes a nation if and when the members of the category firmly recognize certain mutual rights and duties to each other in virtue of their shared membership of it. It is their recognition of each other as fellows of this kind which turns them into a nation, and not the other shared attributes, whatever they might be, which separate that category from non-members.”¹⁷

Anthony D. Smith focuses more on the common history and culture. According to his definition, a nation is “a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and legal rights and duties for all members.”¹⁸

Benedict Anderson describes a nation as an imagined community¹⁹ because people who form a community can feel a sense of belonging to it even if they have never met and will not meet each other. According to Anderson, what made it possible for people to imagine a nation was the development of print-capitalism. By the spreading of books, newspapers etc. people could imagine a common community with others they never encountered living far away from themselves.²⁰

¹⁶ Smith 1999: 6

¹⁷ Gellner 1983: 6-7

¹⁸ Smith 1991: 14

¹⁹ (<http://www.nationalismproject.org/what/anderson.htm>, accessed 1.5.2011. Definition taken from Anderson 1983, *Imagined Communities*)

²⁰ Smith, 1999: 8

As we have seen by these three definitions, the concept of “nation” is quite broad and has many interpretations. While Gellner’s interpretation requires the mutual recognition of the members in order to constitute nation, Smith focuses more on the shared culture and history, as well as legal rights and duties. Anderson sees the nation as something conceived and as a product of spreading of texts. In the Edo-period Japan was a decentralized society where neither of these definitions of “nation” suit. The people lived in domains (*han* 藩) ruled by daimyo and were separated into four social classes. Although Japan had been unified by Tokugawa Ieyasu in 1600, the daimyo had enough autonomy to set their own rules in their domains. That means that different domains could have quite different obligations, rules, and taxation. The freedom of movement was also limited, and people outside the samurai class who wanted to move out of their domain had to get permission from the local rulers. It is likely that people felt more identified with people from their own domain and social class than with other “Japanese” from other domains. This means the people shared legal rights, obligations, and economy only with people from the same social class. Accordingly, Gellner and Smith’s definitions are inadequate.

If early modern Japan was not a nation, then what term is appropriate to use? Susan L. Burns suggests that using the term “community” and “cultural identity” would be more appropriate to describe Japan and Japanese sense of identity in the Edo-period, because Japan was not considered a “nation” in the modern sense until after the modernization of Meiji. According to her, a society as an imagined community is a representation of its interests, beliefs and ideals shared by the members.²¹ In this sense, people’s sense of identity means being part of a “community”, rather than a “nation”. To define this sense of identity, I will apply Burn’s term “cultural identity”. The characteristics of the early modern cultural identity observed in Shinkoku, Bukoku, and Kōkoku thoughts will be dealt with further in Chapter 3.

²¹ Burns, 2003: 3

Cultural identity and myths:

How did these senses of cultural identity come into being? Anthony D. Smith has proposed a theory on the significance of myths in regards to the development of cultural identity. Smith presents two kinds of ethnic myths, that of genealogical ancestry ('biological') and that of ideological descent (cultural-ideological).²² The former is based on filiation and "the chronicles and poets trace generational lineages, and rest their claim for high status and power on a presumed biological link with a hero, a founder, or even a deity."²³ Accordingly, the community is privileged and superior because of the lineage with a hero, founder, or deity. The cultural-ideological myths try to pursue cultural affinity with ancestors from a "golden age". Here, the spiritual kinship, which is "proclaimed in ideals that are allegedly derived from some heroic spirit (and the heroes) that animated 'our ancestors' in some past golden age", is of importance. The descent is traced through "certain kinds of 'virtue' or other cultural qualities, be it of language, customs, religion, institutions, or more general personal attributes."²⁴ The golden age declined because "old virtues were forgotten, moral decay set in, pleasure and vice overcame discipline and self-sacrifice."²⁵ Smith's theory suggests that a certain nostalgia and pride for ancestors functioned as a cornerstone to cultivate people's cultural identity.

The type of cultural identity that we find in Shinkoku, Bukoku, and Kōkoku is closely related to old Japanese myths. Both kinds of ethnic myths mentioned by Smith played a role in forming these cultural identities. The myths of biological ancestry are best represented by the myths found in *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki*, where the bloodline of the Japanese emperor is traced back to the Amaterasu, the Sun Goddess. It expresses the "biological link" to a deity. These myths are central to the Kōkoku discourse. The myths of cultural ideology are also deriving from the myths in *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki*. The golden age that Smith mentions can be compared to the Ancient Way (*Kodō* 古道) as described by the famous Kokugaku scholar Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長.²⁶ The decline of the Ancient Way is often interpreted in a similar manner as Smith's explanation: people forgot the true traditional values by the introduction of the foreign teachings.

²² Smith, 1999:58

²³ Ibid.: 59

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.: 67

²⁶ More about the Ancient way in Kōkoku part of Chapter 3.

Another example on “cultural ideology” myths based on “spiritual kinship” is found in the Bukoku discourse. The Creation myth where Japan was created by Izanagi’s halberd is seen as the origin of the shared spiritual kinship which was displayed by martial valor. Yet an example of the “spiritual kinship” is the idea of Japanese spirit, *Yamato-damashii* 大和魂, which grew popular in the late Edo-period.

Chapter 3: The conception of Shinkoku, Bukoku, and Kōkoku

In this chapter I will show the conception and the historical developments of Shinkoku, Bukoku, and Kōkoku thoughts. Based on what I introduce of representative thoughts and works my own definition of each concept will be provided. As will become clear, some of the characteristics of the Shinkoku concept are found in the other two.

Shinkoku 神国

The Shinkoku discourse has had an important role in Japanese history of ideas since it emerged in the 8th century. It persisted, in various forms, until World War 2. The interpretations of Shinkoku have been many, much due to the fact that the concept itself was quite vague and gave much freedom to the interpreters.

The origin of Shinkoku

A common understanding of Shinkoku has been as a reaction against Buddhist dominance. According to the Buddhist worldview, Japan was portrayed in a negative light as a “peripheral land” (*hendo* 辺土) in the edge of the Buddhist cosmos caught in the final stage of the Buddhist Dharma (*mappō* 末法). It was also a place where evildoers thrived.²⁷ After the Mongols attempt to invade Japan, the divine protection by the kami was displayed by the *kamikaze* (Divine Wind) destroying the Mongol fleet. This led to a notion of Japanese superiority because it was the country favored by the kami. This marked the end of foreign culture (Buddhism) dominance in Japan, and people grew more aware of native culture (Shinto), and therefore Shinkoku thought was an important step for Shinto to overcome Buddhism.

²⁷ Satō Hiroo: Henk Blezer and Mark Teeuwen, eds, *FRAMING IDENTITY DISCOURSE IN BUDDHIST ENVIRONMENTS*, Leiden: Brill (forthcoming)

Scholars such as Kuroda Toshio and Satō Hiroo have opposed this common view and illustrated that rather than being a reaction against Buddhism, Shinkoku thought was a construct of and a part of the Buddhist cosmos. An important factors here is the theory of *honji suijaku* 本地垂迹. The *honji suijaku* theory indicates that buddhas and bodhisattvas were the “original ground” (*honji*), the essence of the buddhas and the bodhisattvas, and transformed themselves and left traces in “this world” in order to save sentient beings. The kami were one kind of such “traces” (*suijaku*) of the buddhas and bodhisattvas from “the other world”. One reason why Japan was the land of the kami was that the buddhas manifested themselves in Japan as kami. Following this logic, the buddhas and the kami were in essence the same.

The most common reason for why the buddhas and the bodhisattvas chose to manifest themselves as kami in the archipelago of Japan was that it was necessary in order to save the evil people of *mappō* 末法, the final stage of the Dharma. It was believed that people could secure themselves a place in the “Pure Land” (*Jōdo* 浄土) of Amida Buddha by making contact with some of the many manifested traces. The kami were not the only traces left by the buddhas and the Bodhisattvas. Along with the kami also saints, Buddhist sculptures, and sacred relics were also considered to be traces from the buddhas. However, the most representative “traces” were the kami.²⁸ In medieval times it was common for people to visit sacred places and pray to the kami enshrined there or other relics in order to secure themselves rebirth in the “Pure Land”. Because it was difficult for ordinary people at the edge of the Buddhist cosmos to believe in a paradise they could not see, buddhas chose the method most suitable for Japan; they showed mercy by manifesting themselves as *kami* in order to guide the inhabitants to the paradise called “Pure Land.”²⁹

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

The differences between medieval and Edo Shinkoku

The transition from the medieval period to the Edo period marked a change in the concept of *Shinkoku*. The medieval concept of *Shinkoku* was, as mentioned above, influenced by the idea of buddhas from another world leaving their traces in this world and manifesting themselves as kami as well as other manifestations. However, in the Edo period peoples' faith in a paradise far away started to fade. They did not believe that the buddhas and kami resided in another world, but rather in temples and shrines in this world. The idea of life after death also changed from that of being reborn in a paradise in another world into that of becoming kami and buddhas residing in shrines and temples in this world.³⁰ This opened the possibility for the kami to achieve a similar status as the buddhas and bodhisattvas. This changed the model from being a vertical one with the buddhas and bodhisattvas above the kami, into a horizontal model where they were of equal value.

The medieval Shinkoku thought was a concept that emphasized Japan's specificity in a broader world where it was the most suitable way for the buddhas to manifest themselves in Japan, as opposed to China where they for instance manifested themselves as sages like Confucius and Lao Zi. However, the change from superiority of the buddhas to equality between the buddhas and the kami in the Edo period removed the barrier that had prevented Shinkoku thought from developing into ethnocentrism.³¹

Another important change was the role of the emperor. The emperor's role in the medieval period was to make sure that Japan remained a divine land by cherishing the buddhas and the kami. At this time, it was also commonly acknowledged that evil emperors would be

³⁰ There were some Kokugaku scholars who made theories about life after death that differed from the more popular view that the dead became kami and resided in shrines. Hirata Atsutane preached about another world where the dead resides called Yomi. This was the world of the kami and it was accessible through this world, however, only on a very limited amount of locations. (See Hansen Wilburn, *When Tengu Talk – Hirata Atsutane's Ethnography of the Other World*, 2008, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press,) Motoori Norinaga also talks about an afterlife based on his interpretation of the myth about Izanami trying to bring back his dead wife Izanami to the world of the living. According to Norinaga, the world of the dead was in an unpleasant and defiled world. (Hansen: 7) However, these views of the world of the dead and the kami were quite different from the medieval view of the other world. These views portrayed the world of the dead as a place that was similar to this world, and not a wonderful paradise in the Pure Land.

³¹ Satō Hiroo: Henk Blezer and Mark Teeuwen, eds, *FRAMING IDENTITY DISCOURSE IN BUDDHIST ENVIRONMENTS*, Leiden: Brill (forthcoming)

punished. Shinkoku thought in the Edo-period presented a different view on the emperor. The emperor became more important, and because of the uninterrupted imperial bloodline, the emperor was sometimes seen as a living kami who ruled the country.

Being a concept with a complex nature and wide range of interpretations I will give my own definition of Shinkoku thought as “the ideas of Japan as a country inhabited, protected, or chosen by the kami and can include the notion of the emperor as a living kami.”

Bukoku 武国

The word Bukoku is symbolising the phrase “the country of martial authority” (*bui no kuni* 武威の国).³² In the following sub-chapters I will provide information about how the concept came into being and how it developed.

The mythical foundation of Bukoku

The concept of Bukoku started to take form in the beginning of the Edo period, and is therefore an early modern concept. It draws on the old creation myth from *Nihonshoki* and *Kojiki*. The main argument is that Izanagi and Izanami created the Japanese archipelago by the heavenly jeweled halberd, Ama-no-nuhoko 天瓊矛,³³ and this symbolizes the Martial qualities (*bu* 武) of Japan. The Ama-no-nuhoko was given by the kami of Heaven to Izanagi and Izanami. They used this halberd to stir in the water and the drops that fell down from the spear into the water became the islands of Japan.

This argumentation was pioneered by Yoshikawa Koretaru 吉川惟足(also read Kikkawa Koretaru, 1616-1694), who was the founder of Yoshikawa Shinto 吉川神道, and Yamaga Sokō. Koretaru was the first to interpret the jeweled halberd as the origin of Bukoku Japan. He explains that the Way of the Nuhoko inherited from Izanagi and the Sun Goddess Amaterasu is an

³² Maeda, 1997: 232

³³ Written 天沼矛 in *Kojiki*

important factor in ruling and that the governing from the Age of the Kami to the Age of Men was always conducted by *bu*.³⁴

This interpretation of the myths worked as a justification of the bakufu's rule by martial authority (*bui* 武威). Koretaru's contemporary, Yamaga Sokō also accepted this interpretation. Sokō also adds that because Japan was created by the Ama-no-nuhoko, the shape of Japan is similar to the shape of a halberd, and that is also the origin to the martial qualities of Japan. It is shown in the following excerpt from *Chūchō jijitsu*:

The eight islands (*Ōyashima* = Japan) were made by the Ama-no-nuhoko, and therefore their form is similar to a jewelled halberd. That is why it was named “the country endowed with plenty of sophisticated weapons” (*kuwashihoko-no-chidaru-no-kuni* 細戈千足国). Moreover, it is the excellent martial quality (*yūbu* 雄武) of the central kingdom [=Japan]. The sacred treasures and magical objects from the beginning of the world are extremely many, and it all started with the Ama-no-nuhoko. By respecting the Martial Virtue (武徳) the meaning of bravery (雄義) is shown. (STK: 200)

Following Koretaru and Sokō's argumentations, the mythically based justification of Bukoku Japan started to spread throughout the early modern period.³⁵ The idea that the Ama-no-nuhoko myth was the origin of the Bukoku persisted till the end of the Edo-period. It is also mentioned in the late Edo Mitogaku scholar Aizawa Seishisai's *Shinron* 新論 (*New theses*).³⁶

The development of the Bukoku concept

According to Maeda Tsutomu, the historical development of the Bukoku concept can roughly be divided into three periods:³⁷

The first period was in the mid-17th century when the concept of Bukoku was established by Koretaru and Sokō. The characteristic of this period is the comparison of Japan with China, and the emphasis on Japanese “excellent martial qualities” (*yūbu* 雄武). Ming Dynasty had just

³⁴ Maeda, 1997: 233

³⁵ Ibid.: 234

³⁶ Ibid.: 236

³⁷ Maeda Tsutomu, *Kinsei Nihon no “bukoku” gainen*, 1997

fallen to the Qing Dynasty (1644) which was ruled by the Manchu minority group. In the East Asian Sinocentric worldview this was seen as the great country of the Middle Civilization (*chūka* 中華) being taken over by barbarians. Neighboring countries like Korea did not show loyalty to the new Qing Emperor. Instead they viewed themselves as inheritors of the Culture of the Middle Civilization, as seen in the *shōchūka shisō* 小中華思想 (“Small-Middle-Civilization-thought”, Ch: *xiaozhonghua sixiang*, K: *sojunghwa sasang*), and they still maintained their loyalty to the fallen Ming Dynasty.³⁸ In Japan too, this shift of power from the Han Chinese to the Manchu “barbarians” led to a consciousness of Japan as a *Bukoku* being superior to China. Japan had never been successfully occupied by foreigners and the rule by military government, as opposed to China’s civil government, was seen as more stable. According to Maeda, this was a way to view Japan as equal to China.³⁹ Yamaga Sokō is representative of this comparison of Japan and China.⁴⁰ Sokō’s view will be further examined in Chapter 4. Another characteristic of this period was the emergence of *tendō* (“the Way of Heaven”) ideas that supported the rule by the military as well as emphasized the martial Way.⁴¹ However, the *tendō* thought was not originating from myths as the *Bukoku* concept was.

The second period started in the first half of the 18th century. In the Kyōhō period (1716-1736), Confucian scholar Ogyū Sorai’s 荻生徂徠 teachings, *Soraigaku*, appeared. Sorai, who looked to China with admiration, recognized the Civil arts, *bun* 文, to be superior to Martial arts, *bu* 武. This led to reactions from other scholars who regarded Martial arts as being superior.⁴² The argumentation used is Ieyasu’s pacification of the realm which was achieved by “Martial Merit” (*gobutoku* 御武徳) and “Martial Authority” (*bui* 武威), not by Confucianism.⁴³ In other words, the pacification and stabilization of the society was achieved by *bu*, and not *bun*.

³⁸ Maeda 2006:107-108

³⁹ According to my findings in Sokō’s writings the interpretation of Sokō viewing Japan as equal to China might need a few adjustments. See Chapter 4.

⁴⁰ Maeda 2006: 139-140

⁴¹ One example is *Tokugawa Goikun*. See the last part of Chapter 4.

⁴² Maeda, 1997: 240

⁴³ *Ibid*: 241

Furthermore, according to Maeda, this period is signified by the spontaneous arising of the notion of Bukoku Japan being superior to China.⁴⁴

The third period started in the end of the 18th century. External threats by the Western powers' advancement led to Bukoku consciousness alongside with Kōkoku and Shinkoku thought. In this period, the times of peace that had been seen as a proof of the quality of Japan as Bukoku were now interpreted as a negative factor that led to samurai indulging in luxury and weakening of the military.⁴⁵ Because of long periods of peace, the true essence of Bukoku had been lost. The policy thought to have the most suitable solution for the problems that had occurred during the time of peace was the *fukoku kyōhei* 富国強兵 policy which urged Japan to “make the country rich and strengthening the army.” Scholars supporting that policy started to promote the revival of the old, original *bu* of Japan and to fight the threatening powers of the West.⁴⁶ A kind of nostalgia for the glorious military past originating from the times of emperor Jinmu (ca. 660AD) can be seen in some of the works from this period. In this period, popularity grew on a idea of a Japanese spirit, *Yamato-damashii* 大和魂, endowed with great bravery and martial abilities (*yūbu* 勇武) appeared. This idea, along with the myth about Ama-no-nuhoko, formed the argument for superior martial abilities latent in the Japanese people.⁴⁷ At the same time, the Japanese spirit also emerged in the Kōkoku discourse as will be shown in the next sub-chapter.

Based on the above information I will define Bukoku thought as “ideas about Japan being superior compared to other countries because of the Military rule and martial culture, as well as the preference of martial arts (*bu*) to civil arts (*bun*).”

⁴⁴ Ibid: 242

⁴⁵ Ibid.: 242-243

⁴⁶ Ibid: 245

⁴⁷ Ibid: 242, 246

Kōkoku 皇国

Kōkoku thought is an emperor-centered view of Japan that focuses on the uninterrupted imperial bloodline descending from the kami. This idea can be traced back to the medieval period.⁴⁸ The word “Kōkoku,” literally meaning “the Imperial Country,” was the name Kokugaku scholars used to address Japan in the later half of the Edo-period.⁴⁹ The Kōkoku view has mainly been represented by Kokugaku scholars, the Mito School, and to some degree Suika Shinto.

Suika Shinto was the earliest of the three schools. It was founded by Yamazaki Ansai 山崎闇斎 (1618-1682), a Confucian scholar who later developed interest in Shinto. Ansai learned about Shinto from Yoshikawa Koreataru (see the “Bukoku” part in this chapter) who created the Yoshikawa Shinto School. Eventually, Ansai developed a doctrine combining Shinto with Confucian teachings.⁵⁰ Ansai’s approach to find the Neo-Confucian truth in the Shinto classics is through philological research. One of the main teachings in Suika Shinto was that the Principle (J: *ri*, Ch: *li* 理), from Neo-Confucianism, was embodied in the kami of Shinto. He also interprets that the principles of Heaven and humans are the same (*tenjin gōitsu* 天人合一). The creation of the world, which in Neo-Confucianism is explained by principle and material form, was interpreted as the doing of the kami. In men’s mind, one could find the spirit of the kami, and this was what made Heaven and human identified with each other.⁵¹ By the belief that the spirit of the kami is inherent in human beings, Ansai created his own personal cult where he revered himself as a living shrine. Further, Ansai identifies Amaterasu, the Sun Goddess and the imperial ancestor, as the embodiment of the union of kami and humans. The emperor’s uninterrupted bloodline originating from the kami is adduced as proof of the relation of Heaven and man, and this is what ranks Japan above other countries.⁵²

The Kokugaku scholars studied Japanese literature, poetry, and religion (Shinto) and searched for the supremacy of Japan in history and myths. Where the Confucian scholars looked to China with admiration, Kokugaku scholars looked into what was originally Japanese before

⁴⁸ It is also the main theme in the famous work *Jinnō shōtōki* 神皇正統記 (1339) by Kitabatake Chikafusa 北畠親房.

⁴⁹ Maeda, 2006: 37

⁵⁰ See Ooms 1985, Chapter six and seven

⁵¹ Teeuwen and Breen, 2003: p. 133

⁵² Ooms, 1985: 229-30

the arrival of Confucianism and Buddhism from the mainland. They showed the beauty, simplicity, and purity of the “Japanese” classics and aimed at regaining the pride of belonging to “Japan”.⁵³ The uninterrupted imperial lineage tracing back all the way to the age of the kami (*kamiyo* 神代) and the “ancient Way” (*kodō* 古道) are central themes in the Kōkoku thought of the Kokugaku scholars. The age of the kami is referring to the period before mankind, from the creation of the world to the first human emperor. The “ancient Way” was the way of the people on the Japanese archipelago before they were influenced by foreign teachings and religions. The ancient way was a natural way that was not created or invented by humans, but inherited from the kami. People would then naturally follow their imparted instincts.⁵⁴ Especially Confucianism was blamed for being an invention by humans which manipulated peoples’ original “pure hearts” (*magokoro* 真心) that all Japanese possessed at birth.⁵⁵ By studying ancient texts, the Kokugaku scholars could gain insight into the unique and ancient “Japanese way”.

The religious aspects of Kokugaku teachings were derived from myths about the creation of Japan by the kami Izanagi and Izanami, and the first human emperor, Jinmu, who was the descendent of Amaterasu, the Sun-goddess. The emperor was seen as the source of the sincerity of the people and the order and harmony of the country. He would act selflessly in accordance with the precedents from the Age of the kami and made an example of refraining from human’s egoistical desires.⁵⁶ Because the emperor was a descendent of Amaterasu, the sun goddess, the imperial house signified the highest existence in the human world. Japan was thought to be superior to other countries because of the true ancient way it possessed, the fact that it was the first country to be made by the kami, and because of the uninterrupted imperial bloodline.⁵⁷

Mitogaku 水戸学 refers to the scholarship and academic traditions of the Mito-domain in the Edo-period.⁵⁸ It is most known for the effort to compile a complete Japanese history book, *Dai Nihonshi* 大日本史 – *The Great History of Japan*. During this process, Mitogaku went through various developments and took also a part in discussing political and social issues. The

⁵³ Maeda, 2006: 37

⁵⁴ Nosco, 1990: 13

⁵⁵ Ibid.: 8-9

⁵⁶ Isomae, 2010: 111

⁵⁷ Nosco, 1990: 12-13, Maeda, 2006: 220

⁵⁸ Kokugakuin - Encyclopedia of Shinto: <http://eos.kokugakuin.ac.jp/modules/xwords/entry.php?entryID=1357>

early period of Mitogaku, from the middle of the 17th century to the 18th century, concentrated mostly on historiography. The approach was based on a Confucian historical view where they showed how history was followed by moral law.⁵⁹ The later period of Mitogaku, from the end of the 18th century to the bakumatsu-period,⁶⁰ the scholars became more active in contributing to social and political issues. When western powers started to put more pressure on Japan to open its doors and the bakufu's power was weakening, the *Sonnō jōi* 尊皇攘夷 (“Revere the Emperor, Expel the Barbarians”) movement occurred in the early 1860s. It was highly influenced by Mitogaku and Hirata Atsutane's Kokugaku.⁶¹ The theoretical basis for this movement was made by Mitogaku scholars in the end of the 18th century and further developed by representative works like Aizawa Seishisai's *Shinron*. During this time, a belief in the Japanese spirit, *Yamato-damashii*, became more popular among Kōkoku followers. Its characteristics differed somewhat from the Japanese spirit found among Bukoku thinkers in that some Kōkoku followers, like Hirata Atsutane, emphasized to revere and sacrifice oneself for the emperor.⁶²

Depending on the above information, I will define Kōkoku thought as “ideas of Japan being a superior country because of the uninterrupted imperial bloodline and the “old way” which was possessed by the Japanese.”

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ *Bakumatsu* 幕末 is the name of the period of the last years of military rule, usually referring to the period after Commodore Perry came to Japan (1853) to the Meiji Restoration in 1868.

⁶¹ Totman, 1993: 542-43. The *Sonnō jōi* movement opposed the bakufu, urged for the restoration of direct imperial rule, and was one of the internal factors that led to the Meiji restoration in 1868.

⁶² Kasulis, 2004: 129

Chapter 4: Yamaga Sokō

In this chapter I will enquire into Yamaga Sokō's writings, focusing mainly on *Chūchō jijitsu* 中朝事實 ("Actual facts about the Central realm"), and examine where Sokō's ideas can be placed in relation to the Bukoku discourse and the Kōkoku discourse.

The life of Yamaga Sokō

There is no biography written by any of Yamaga Sokō's contemporaries. However, while being in exile Sokō wrote a letter, *Haisho zanpitsu* 配所残筆 ("Last Testament in Exile"), to his younger brother Yamaga Saburōemon 山鹿三郎右衛門 and his nephew Oka Hachirōzaemon 岡八郎左衛門. It is partly an autobiography. According to *Haisho zanpitsu*, Sokō was introduced to the Chinese classics at the age of six, and when he was 9 he started to study under Hayashi Razan 林羅山⁶³ and taught Confucian classics at the early age of 15. At the age of 17 he was introduced to Imube Shinto 忌部神道 and he received a certificate saying that he had learned all the secrets of Imube Shinto.⁶⁴ Later Buddhism and Taoism were also included in his scholarly subjects.⁶⁵

Sokō studied martial arts and military strategy under Obata Kagenori 小幡影憲 and Hōjō Ujinaga 北条氏長 who were among the best in the field at that time.⁶⁶ Later he became famous because of his studies of martial arts, and he opened his own school, Yamaga-ryū Heigaku 山鹿流兵学, which lasted till the end of the Edo-period. It was in this field Sokō achieved most success. For instance, by publishing *Shidō* 士道, he was the first in the history to systemize the samurai code of conduct later known as Bushido 武士道.

⁶³ 1583-1657. Hayashi Razan was a Neo-Confucian scholar who was the tutor and advisor of the four first Tokugawa shoguns. He was the founder of the Hayashi Neo-Confucian School. (Source: *Kokugakuin Encyclopedia of Shinto*)

⁶⁴ Uenaka, 1977: 133

⁶⁵ Uenaka, 1977: 148, STK: 316

⁶⁶ Uenaka, 1977: 127

After reflecting on what he had studied and learned thitherto he was never fully satisfied. He questioned the usage of the abstract metaphysics that were taught, as well as the quiet sitting (*seiza* 静座), which was a practice promoted in some of the Neo-Confucian traditions from the Song dynasty.⁶⁷ Eventually he realized that he had to go back to the classics from the time of Confucius in their original form in order to find the application of the moral taught in daily life. The original texts would be useful even for uneducated people by virtue of their simplicity.⁶⁸ Sokō was therefore the first scholar of Ancient Learning (Kogaku 古学) which was a reaction to the contemporary Neo-Confucian schools of Zhu Xi (J: Shushigaku 朱子学) and Yang-Ming (J: Yōmeigaku 陽明学).

In 1665, after publishing *Seikyō yōroku* 聖教要録 (“The Fundamentals of Sacred Teaching”) containing critique of Neo-Confucian schools’ teachings⁶⁹, he was sent in exile to Akō to be under custody of his former employer Lord Asano. According to what Sokō wrote in *Haisho zanpitsu*, he was told that the reason for his banishment was that he had published an offensive book. When he inquired what was offensive about it, he did not receive an answer, just an explanation that the order of his exile had already been made, and therefore it would not help even if he tried to say something/speak in self defence.⁷⁰ The exact reason why he was sent in exile might have been more than just academic disputes with rivalling scholars.⁷¹

During the exile Sokō continued to study, teach, and write, and it was here he wrote *Chūchō jijitsu*. In the same year as he wrote *Haisho zanpitsu* (1675) he was pardoned by the

⁶⁷ SJT: 111, 188. However, the quiet sitting practice was controversial in the Neo-Confucian tradition. (p. 86)

⁶⁸ Uenaka, 1977: 150

⁶⁹ Sokō criticized the Confucian scholars of Han, Tang, Song, and Ming for complicating things and because of that making people confused. According to Sokō the real Confucian Way is one you can apply to in everyday life. SJT: 194-198

⁷⁰ Uenaka, 1977: 143-144, STK: 311-312

⁷¹ It has been suggested that the reason why the bakufu ordered Yamaga Sokō to be exiled was because Sokō was valuing martial arts, *bu* 武, above civil arts, *bun* 文, while the bakufu wished to put a greater emphasis on *bun*. Fifteen years earlier there had been uprisings among ronin lead by Yui Shōsetsu 由井正雪 (1605-1651). (Yui Shōsetsu was a Military strategy (Heigaku) teacher with many pupils who along with Mariachi Chūya 丸橋忠弥 and others plotted to overthrow the bakufu) The bakufu might have feared that similar uprisings could happen again if the *Bu* had gained more popularity (Totman, 1993: 130-131). Another suggestion is that Hoshina Masayuki, an influential individual in the bakufu and daimyo of Aizu, personally insisted on punishing Sokō. Masayuki died in 1672, and in 1675 the bakufu pardoned Sokō. After being pardoned, Sokō continued to teach on *Seikyō Yōroku*, the book which had been the cause of his exile. (Ooms, 1985: 77)

bakufu and moved back to Edo. There he lived the rest of his life until he died in 1685. One of his biggest dreams was to be hired by the bakufu, a dream that never came true. However, he did have over 1000 students in his lifetime, and among them there were several retainers of the bakufu and daimyos.⁷²

Sokō and Japan as a divine land

After Sokō had been banished from Edo he started to develop his ideas in a nativistic direction. In order to understand Sokō's view on Japan as Shinkoku, we need to look into his works from this time. Especially representative for this period is the book *Chūchō jijitsu* written in 1669. In this work we can see several of the characteristics from the above mentioned Bukoku- and Kōkoku-discourses. By analyzing important parts of this work we get a picture of his ideas of Japan as a divine country.

Sokō's view on why Japan is the land of the kami is very typical that of the Edo-period Shinkoku thought. The divinity of the Emperor and the ties between the Emperor and the kami are the main reason for Japan being Shinkoku:

“The Central Dynasty [=Japan] is the land of the kami. The imperial ancestor came from the heavenly and earthly kami. Those are the Heaven and Earth kami and the kami that one worships when worshipping ancestors.” (STK: 216)

Also in *Buke jiki* 武家事紀 which was also written by Sokō during his time in exile, the emperor has great importance as well as supreme authority as the descendent of the kami. The reason why the Emperor has the supreme authority is connected to the fact that he is the descendent of Amaterasu, the Sun Goddess, and it legitimizes the Emperor as the ruler:

“The Imperial Court is the Forbidden Precinct. Happily, the line descended from Amaterasu has possessed hereditary authority for countless generations. Accordingly, even though a military general has grasped the power and directs government and letters within the four seas, this is nevertheless for the reason that he has been commanded to oversee all state affairs on behalf of

⁷² Uenaka, 1977: 127

the Imperial Court, and his serving of the Imperial Court diligently, without the slightest negligence, is in accordance with the Great Propriety obtaining between lord and subject.” (NST: 27, and Totman: 170, referring to translation by David Magarey Earl, *Emperor and Nation in Japan*, Seattle, University of Washington Press, 1964, p. 43)

The ruler and subject relationship between the Emperor and the bakufu comes clear here. The Emperor is the ruler who legitimates the bakufu rule of Japan. The bakufu dealt with domestic affairs because the emperor vested them with the right and power. The bakufu must do this “in accordance with the Great Propriety obtaining between lord and subject”. In short, as long as the Shogun is subject to and respects the Imperial Court his rule is fully legitimate.

The importance of the warrior class to submit to the Imperial court is further illustrated in another text from *Yamaga Gorui* 山鹿語類.⁷³ The loyalty of Kusunoki Masashige,⁷⁴ who was on Emperor Godaigo’s side in the Kenmu restoration⁷⁵ and the overthrowing of the Kamakura bakufu, is shown as an example here. Masashige is praised for his loyalty to the Emperor several places:

“Masashige made an example by entrusting himself to the ruler (Emperor), and this can be called the true mind of a faithful servant and loyal gentleman (*chūshin gishi* 忠臣義士).” (STK: 30, excerpt from *Yamaga Sokō Zenshū*, Volume 6, p: 167)

“Kusunoki Masashige protected the Imperial court and fought its enemies. He had no other selfish motivations. This should be called the uttermost loyal gentleman.” (STK: 30, excerpt from *Yamaga Sokō Zenshū*, Volume 4, p: 164)

It is important for a samurai to be loyal to the Imperial Court and to protect it. The loyal samurai should be completely obedient to the Emperor, and in the case of Kusunoki, even at the cost of

⁷³*Yamaga Gorui* is a collection of Yamaga Sokō’s teachings compiled by his followers in 1665 consisting of 43 volumes. (Source: *Nihon Kokugo Daijiten*)

⁷⁴ Kusunoki Masashige 楠木正成 (1294-1336) was a military general who fought for Emperor Godaigo 後醍醐 in his attempt to reinstate direct imperial rule. He died in battle fighting the forces of Ashikaga Takauji 足利尊氏. Takauji eventually became the Shogun of the Muromachi Bakufu.

⁷⁵ 建武新政(*Kenmu-no-shinsei*). Emperor Godaigo sought to reinstate direct imperial rule, and managed eventually to overthrow the Kamakura bakufu. Godaigo’s rule lasted from 1333 to 1336, and was replaced by the Muromachi Bakufu.

his own life. This is also connected to Yamaga Sokō's own systemized code of conduct for the Samurai, *Shido*, where loyalty (*gi* 義) to one's master is one of the samurai's virtues.⁷⁶

Sokō's Kōkoku thought can be seen in his description and explanation on Japan as a superior to other countries. The imperial lineage is what makes the Emperor the only legitimate ruler of Japan and also it is what makes Japan unique and sovereign to other countries. This is in accordance with typical Kōkoku thought. In *Chūchō jijitsu* it is shown by comparison of the continuity of Japanese imperial rule with the frequently change of rulers in China and Korea:

The Imperial line was decided once and this has not been changed even after billions of generations. All the people of the realm (*tenka*) received the calendar and have not been confused about the time.⁷⁷ All the provinces recognized the king's (emperor's) mandate and followed its customs. The three Bonds⁷⁸ will never decay, and the influence of eminent virtue⁷⁹ will not fall into ashes. [This is something] foreign countries cannot obtain no matter how they plot and desire [it]. In China (*gaichō*⁸⁰) the surnames [of the emperors] have changed and there have been about 30 surnames. The ruling families have changed about 30 times. There are many reigns where barbarians have entered [the country] and became king (emperor). In the approximately 240 year long Spring and Autumn period⁸¹ as many as 25 retainers killed their own lord. The rebellious retainers and traitors after that increased rapidly. After Ji Zi⁸² got the order from the Emperor and became King in Korea, the family name [of the ruler] changed between four clans. They destroyed the country and did things like making it into country districts and annihilating The Kō clan (*Koguryō* 高句麗) after about two generations. During the 218 years of the Lee clan's rule there were 4 persons who killed their king. Not to mention the rebellions before and after that was nothing different from beasts and birds killing each other. However, from the beginning of the central kingdom (中国⁸³) till the first human Emperor (Jinmu 神武), about 2 million years, and from the [first] human Emperor till today, about 2300 years, the imperial line of the heavenly

⁷⁶ About *gi* in *Shidō* see NST: 53

⁷⁷ Calendars are made after the years of the ruling emperors. If there were two or more clans which ruled simultaneously there would be two or more calendars, but because the ruling clan in Japan never changed, people used the same calendar and were never confused about the time.

⁷⁸ 三綱 (*sankō*) Ruler and subject 君臣, father and son 父子, and husband and wife 夫婦.

⁷⁹ 徳化 (*tokke*)

⁸⁰ 外朝 Foreign dynasty (China)

⁸¹ 春秋 (J: *Shunjū*, C: *Chunqiu*) BCE 722 - BCE481

⁸² 箕子 (J: Kishi) A Chinese sage who is said to have ruled Gojoseon (古朝鮮) in the 12th century BCE.

⁸³ Here referring to Japan

kami has never changed. And during that time the revolts that included killing of one's master or father are so few that we can even count them on one hand. ...It is already about 500 years since the military (samurai) took the power after Emperor Goshirakawa (後白河). During that period, there were some instances where some sharp tongues and long claws (利嘴長距) made it on to the stage, and some stupid (Monkeys wearing hat) and greedy people (Big pigs) (冠猴封豕) made a fire in the mugwort in the autumn. However, they still respected the royal family and the loyalty between ruler and subject [always] existed. This is [because of] the knowledge and virtue of the Heavenly kami and the human Emperor and this is obvious and clear. This is something we must not forget until the end of the world. The [Emperor's] substantially influencing Merit which is the distribution of law and order is in this way permanent and endless [because] it all came out from true sincerity. When the three bonds have been established, the publishing of law articles subsists in the perfection of governing. Even the size of the whole world and the wide range of the foreign countries cannot be compared with Japan (中州 *chūshū*) by its influence of the Imperial line and by the Merits of the civil and the martial (文武 *bunbu*) arts. Is not this highest form of Virtue great? (STK: 126)

The loyalty between ruler and subject was always consistent, and the reason was the emperor's merit which influenced the people to become benevolent by knowing "clearly that the three bonds are not to be forgotten." Hence the imperial house was always respected and could continue to rule uninterrupted. The change of the ruling clans in China and Korea are contrasted with the one and only Imperial house Japan. In China the ruling clans changed 30 times, and in the Spring and Autumn period there were as many as 25 retainers who killed their masters. According to Sokō, murdering one's master or father were extremely rare in Japan, and even when there were some instances where "sharp tongues and long claws made it on to the stage", still, the Imperial house was always respected.

A second argument for Japan's sovereignty is the "climate argument" (*Suidoron* 水土論). By comparing the climate and geographical location of Japan and China, Sokō argues that Japan actually deserves to be called the "central kingdom" (*Chūgoku* 中国, the name for China) rather than China. In the *Chūgoku* Chapter in *Chūchō jijitsu*, Sokō argues that only China and Japan qualify to be called the Central Kingdom. But when the two countries are compared, it is clear that Japan is more qualified because:

“The landscape of our country is broad from east to west and thin from south to north... The ocean surrounds all four directions and only on the west side is it barely possible to visit foreign borders by boat, and therefore, there is no danger of being attacked. That is why it is called “Urayasu-no-kuni” 浦安国 (“The safe country”) and “Tamagaki-no-uchi-tsu-kuni” 玉墙内国 (“The country inside a jewelled fence”). Its shape is like a halberd (*hoko*) and there is nothing that is not available, and the land is excellent. For this reason it is called “Kuwashi-hoko-no-chidaru-kuni” 細戈千足国. From old times till now, China has been used as a model with Japan and Korea being under [China]. The way I see it, between the four seas only Japan and China have gained the excellence of the world and unified the kami and the sages. However, China has not yet achieved the true excellence that Japan has. When it comes to China, the borders are extremely broad and they border with the four barbarians. Since there is no clear “core” the defence armies are many, but still they cannot protect its scale. This is China’s first shortcoming. China is near the four barbarians and therefore they build and strengthened the Great Wall which exhausted the common people. This is the second shortcoming. The followers of the protectors either let the enemy in or run over to the enemy and leak information. This is the third shortcoming. The Huns, Khitans, and Mongols easily spied on China’s weaknesses and often threatened and robbed China. This is the fourth shortcoming. Finally, what weakens this country is the changing of the ruling families, and this is the fifth and the biggest flaw.” (STK: 115)

By the merit of the surrounding sea and the far distance to other countries, Japan is a safe country as opposed to China. The reasons for Japan’s justification of being called the Central Kingdom traces back to Sokō’s Shinkoku thought:

In our country, as early as from the Age of the kami there were the kami Ama-no-minakanushi 天御中主尊 (Ruler of the center of Heaven), and the two kami [Izanagi and Izanami]. [They] planted a pole in the middle of the country. Therefore Japan is the Central Kingdom (Chūgoku). It is the nature of the universe. Kami giving birth to other kami, the continuity of the never ending [rule by] sage Emperors, and the excellence in civil and martial matters are truly making a good balance. Do we even need to force this naming [of Japan as the Central Kingdom]? (STK: 113)

Again Sokō refers to the myths from *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki* to justify his argument. Ama-no-minakanushi is the kami of the Universe. He sits in the center of Heaven, and from there, together with Izanagi and Izanami, he plants a pole in the middle of the land. Probably, Sokō interpreted it as what is under the center of Heaven must be the Central Kingdom. Further

references are made to kami, sage emperors, and civil and martial arts, which all contribute to making balance in the realm.

The importance of *bu* 武

Apart from focusing on the emperor and the uninterrupted imperial bloodline as we have seen so far, Sokō puts great emphasis values related to the martial Way (*budō* 武道) of Japan. Terms like martial virtue (*butoku* 武徳) and martial authority (*bui* 武威) are values that are important in Bukoku thought, and they are highly regarded in Sokō's writings. Also in *Chūchō jijitsu* where Sokō refers to the mythology from *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*, Martial values are emphasised and attributed to the kami of the old legends.

One important part is the legend about Susanoo – the storm god, and Amaterasu – the sun goddess. Here Susanoo decides to pay his sister, Amaterasu, a last visit after being dispelled from Heaven by Izanagi. Sokō interprets this as Amaterasu intentionally preparing for battle in order to teach the generations to come about the necessity of military preparedness (*bubi* 武備):

“This means that the Sun Goddess raised an army after dressing herself with military equipment. This is the holy spirit of the Sun Goddess. Under heaven (*tenka*), who can match her? But still, she set up the preparedness with an [army of] strong men (*daijōfu no sonae*) for protection. This was to give a warning to the future generations that would teach them to prepare themselves for what is yet to come. Therefore, the meaning of preparedness is to foresee. When preparedness exists one will be at peace, and when preparedness does not exist one will be destroyed. All things under heaven are like this.” (STK: 201)

The military preparedness (*bubi* 武備) mentioned here is also mentioned as one of the qualities that the samurai should have as described in *Shido*:

“The samurai must be prepared with civil and martial virtue and knowledge. Then, on the outside he will be fully engaged in swordsmanship, the art of spear, archery, and horsemanship. On the inside, he will fulfil the way of the ruler and subject, friends, father and son, brothers, and husband and wife (the five bonds). The civil way is in his heart, and the military preparedness is arranged on the outside.” (NST: 32)

In the proceeding part of the legend the importance of Martial Authority is shown with another example from how Amaterasu dealt with her violent brother:

“Therefore, the army is a necessity. There will certainly be unexpected happenings and surprises, hence one should consider far and think deeply (遠慮深思) when setting up military preparation. Then it will be difficult [for the enemy] to confront [one] and [one] will not be harmed. Susanoo is the younger brother of the Goddess. Since he confronted Heaven in such bad manners, Amaterasu made her martial face austere and accused him. She thought Yashima (= Japan) would be destroyed by him, and the people would sink because of him. Therefore she punished his intentions by putting on martial authority (*bui*), and this is most dreadful.” (STK: 201)

The origin of Japan’s Bu is traced back to the Creation myth. The story about Izanagi and Izanami creating Japan by stirring in the water with the Heavenly jewelled halberd, Ama-no-nuhoko, is interpreted as the origin of the martial authority (*bui*) of Japan:

“The fact that the halberd was made from jewels is [showing] the non-killing sacred martial virtue. When the world was not yet civilised and human knowledge not developed, the violence and evils were conquered and cruel bandits were scared away. Without Martial Authority (*bui*) [it] could never be gained. Therefore, the heavenly descendant’s coming to earth is also said to be following the halberd and jewels. There are natural reasons reason for the fact that the foreign dynasty [=China] and all the barbarians can never achieve the authority and military force of the central dynasty [=Japan].” (STK: 127-8)

The start of Japan’s martial culture is related to the halberd. When the heavenly descendant rid the realm of evils, it was done by the means of Martial Authority following the way of the halberd. Again, Japan is claimed to be sovereign to other countries, this time because of the martial qualities it possesses. This view is typically that of Bukoku thought. Ama-no-nuhoko is also, as we saw in Chapter 3, the symbol of the *bu* of Japan as well as the reason for Japan’s shape which is similar to a halberd.⁸⁴

⁸⁴ The idea of Japan being shaped as a halberd can be traced to the medieval period. In *Chūchō Jijitsu* Sokō refers to Kitabatake Chikafusa’s *Gengenshū* 元元集. An interesting comparison for future studies might be the Buddhist mandalization of Japan, which sees the shape of Japan as that of a vajra-mandala (*dokko* 独鈷), with the idea of Japan being shaped as a halberd.

Sokō's thought compared to *tendō* rhetoric

In order to show how Sokō's view was distinguished from his contemporaries, I will make a comparison between it and *tendō* 天道 ("Way of Heaven") thought, which was popular in the middle 17th century. *Tendō* was seen as the natural and vital order of all existing things.⁸⁵ It was thought that Heaven would determine who shall rule, and the ruler must be loyal to the Way of Heaven in order to keep his position. Ruling houses that do not follow the Way of Heaven will lose their mandate and collapse as a result.⁸⁶ The concept of *tendō* originated from ancient China and is seen in many of the Chinese classics. It was exported to Japan with the Chinese classics where it was used and was first seen in Japanese texts in the eighth century. However, it did not play a significant part in Japanese history of ideas until the first half of the 17th century.⁸⁷

The *tendō* philosophy has been suggested by Herman Ooms⁸⁸ to have worked as a legitimating ideology for the rule by the Tokugawa bakufu. The first Tokugawa shogun, Ieyasu, was deified after his death and his rule was in that way legitimated. However, according to Ooms, the following generations needed something else in order to make the people approve of their rule and with the purpose of convincing people that the Tokugawa rule was legitimate an ideology based on *tendō* philosophy was made during the rule of the third Tokugawa shogun, Iemitsu 家光 (1604-1651).⁸⁹ The fact that the rule by the Tokugawa family had lasted for three generations was used as a proof that the rule was in accordance with the Way of Heaven. *Tōshōgū goikun* 東照宮御遺訓 (Ieyasu's Testament; lit: Venerable rules left by the Tōshō Shrine – The Great Avatar Shining over the East)⁹⁰ is one of the texts where the Way of Heaven is most clearly explained. In this work there are also examples of cases where ruling houses (for example those of Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi) lost their power because they did not rule in accordance with the Way of Heaven. Ooms suggests that *Tōshōgū goikun* was published by the bakufu, but later studies have shown that *Tōshōgū goikun* only circulated in manuscript

⁸⁵ Ooms, 1985: 89-90

⁸⁶ Ibid: 66-67

⁸⁷ SJT: 70

⁸⁸ *Tokugawa Ideology*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1985

⁸⁹ Iemitsu was in power as shogun from 1623-1651.

⁹⁰ It is highly unlikely that it was actually written by Ieyasu. The actual writer is however unknown. It was published during Iemitsu's rule. For more about this, see Ooms, 1985, chapter 3.

form, and was never published.⁹¹ Also, it is pointed out that the most ideological *tendō* texts were written by lower-ranking samurai and addressed to the rulers, probably as a way to please the rulers.⁹² Therefore, *tendō* was not an ideology intentionally made by the Tokugawa government. Rather, it was a popular rhetoric that was often seen among the lower-rank samurai. However, it did have some impact in legitimizing the rule by Tokugawa.

In the *tendō* rhetoric found in *Tōshōgū goikun*, *budō* (the Martial Way) was the necessary instrument by which to uphold the Way of Heaven by killing evils and preventing chaos to emerge in the realm.⁹³ In this way, the martial power of Tokugawa was a means for establishing a good society. Here we see clear resemblances with Sokō who emphasises the importance of *bu* when the realm was pacified in the beginning of human history. The “violence and evils were conquered and cruel bandits were scared away.” This was only possible by martial authority.

According to the *tendō* rhetoric, the authority of the shogun was given by Heaven, and not the emperor. In fact, the relationship between the shogun and the emperor is not even mentioned in *Tōshōgū goikun*.⁹⁴ Sokō, on the other hand, approves for the rule by the shogun exactly because the emperor gave the mandate to the shogun.

In *Tōshōgū goikun* the kami Sumiyoshi Daimyōjin 住吉大明神⁹⁵ is interpreted in a new manner, completely different from the story of Sumiyoshi from *Nihon Shoki*. The kami of Sumiyoshi, who originally are the kami of navigation and tanka poetry⁹⁶, are here interpreted as the divine shogun.⁹⁷ Similarly, Sokō attributes martial abilities and values to Amaterasu and makes her a sort of “Warrior-Goddess.”

The combination of Shinto on Confucianism is another similarity between Sokō’s thought and *tendō* ideology. Confucianism and Shinto were, according to *tendō*, based on the same principle and were therefore considered to be the same. The first Japanese emperor, Jinmu, ruled

⁹¹ Teeuwen, Mark. "The Way of Heaven in 1816: Ideology or rhetoric?" In: Anna Beerens & Mark Teeuwen, eds, *Uncharted waters: Intellectual life in the Edo period*. Leiden: Brill, forthcoming

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid: 68

⁹⁴ Ibid: 67

⁹⁵ Sumiyoshi Daimyōjin refers to the three kami and empress Jingō who are worshipped at the Sumiyoshi shrine in Osaka.

⁹⁶ *Kōjien*

⁹⁷ Ooms, 1985: 98

in the same way as the Sage-kings Yao and Shun of old China.⁹⁸ In Sokō's account of the imperial line important Confucian values like respect towards the royal family, loyalty between ruler and subject, and the unceasing three bonds are mentioned. These can all be traced back to the knowledge and virtue of the Heavenly kami and the human Emperor (Jinmu).⁹⁹ One difference is, however, that according to Sokō, the rule by merit was continuous and never-ending. According to *tendō*, in earlier times people in Japan knew how to rule in accordance with the Way of Heaven, but later, this knowledge was lost. Rulers that only lasted for one or two generations were many.¹⁰⁰ Obviously, the rulers referred to here are the military leaders who had the power. Sokō still sees the emperor as the highest authority, and because the Imperial house never was challenged, he sees it as a sign of rightful rule and loyal subjects.

⁹⁸ Ibid: 92

⁹⁹ STK: 126

¹⁰⁰ Ooms, 1985: 90

Chapter 5: Buyō Inshi

Not much is known about Buyō Inshi and it is therefore, not possible to provide a biography as I did with Yamaga Sokō in Chapter 4. What we know about Buyō is limited to what he tells us about himself in *Seji Kenbunroku*. His name is a pseudonym which means “the Hidden (or Retired) Gentleman from Musashi (that is Edo).”¹⁰¹ His true identity is still unknown, but we know that he was a samurai, maybe a *rōnin*, living in Edo, and he mentions that he had no formal instruction/education.¹⁰² However, according to the references he makes it is clear that he knew quite a few works by other scholars.

The reason for selecting Buyō as one of the objects for my study is because his views are quite unexpected to find in his time. Buyō, being from another intellectual layer than the elite scholars of his time, has distinguished ideas compared to the intellectual trend. While the intellectual trend of Buyō’s time is mostly thought to have been mainly represented by Neo-Confucianism and Kokugaku, Buyō is more interested in *budō* and *tendō* rhetoric from the middle of the 17th century. It might suggest that the *tendō* rhetoric still had some impact on a group of people in the samurai class as late as in the early 18th century.

Since it was about 150 years later than when Yamaga Sokō published *Chūchō jijitsu*, a brief summary of the changes and developments in the society and the history of ideas is needed. Therefore, I will give a picture of the historical background of Buyō’s time before I start the analysis.

Historical background

In Yamaga Sokō’s time, in the 17th century, Japan was growing economically and the number of inhabitants increased. During the 17th century, the population had more than doubled as a result of the economic growth¹⁰³ and some surveys suggest that the areas suitable for agriculture grew

¹⁰¹ Teeuwen, 2010: 29

¹⁰² SKR: 433

¹⁰³ Totman, 1993: 140

to almost twice in size from 1600 to 1720.¹⁰⁴ According to the *sankin kōtai* 参勤交代 policy which was launched under the rule of the third shogun, Iemitsu 家光 (tenure from 1623-1651), all daimyo were forced to stay in Edo for six months every year. After finishing their duty in Edo, they would leave their families in Edo while they went back to their domain to handle local affairs for another six months.¹⁰⁵ The result of this policy was a rapid increase in Edo's urban population that reached half a million in 1657 and it had surpassed one million inhabitants by 1720.¹⁰⁶

The Genroku 元禄 period (1688-1704) is most known for its prosperity of popular culture. However, it also marked a turning point for society. It was the end of an era of dynamic growth, and the beginning of an era of stagnation.¹⁰⁷ By the end of Genroku, the environmental situation had changed considerably from the situation a century earlier. There was not much room for further expansion of agriculture and the gold and silver mines had been largely exhausted.¹⁰⁸ In addition to the problems of insufficient supplies, the increase of famine and bad crops was a major problem in the 18th century. Famine was not an unusual phenomenon, yet the scale and the frequency of the famines after 1700 grew strikingly. The usual cause of the famine was bad crops due to weather conditions, insect infestations, and natural disasters.¹⁰⁹ The two largest famines in the 18th century were the Kyōhō famine and the Tenmei famine. In the Kyōhō famine in 1732-33 over 12 000 people died of starvation and 2 000 000 people starved due to cold rain and insect infestations that ruined the crop. In 1783 the volcano eruption in Mt. Asama cold rain led to the Tenmei famine that lead to tens of thousands deaths, as well as violent protests and rampage by commoners (*ikki* 一揆).¹¹⁰ The violent protest increased during the later years of the 18th century. In 1787, still suffering from bad crop, the biggest riot so far occurred. Hundreds of

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.: 149

¹⁰⁵ To force the daimyo families to stay behind in Edo was a measure to make sure that no daimyo would make a conspiracy against the Tokugawa rule.

¹⁰⁶ Totman 1993: 153

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.: 280

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.: 235

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.: 236

¹¹⁰ Ibid.: 236-40

shops were destroyed in what was the first of *yonaoshi* 世直し riots that called for “world renovation”.¹¹¹

The worsened economical situation and the problem of overpopulation in Edo led to new discussions on how to handle the problems. Arguably, one of the most influential scholars from the first half of the 18th century was Ogyū Sorai 荻生徂徠 (1666-1728). Sorai’s teachings were subject of discussion up to the end of the Edo period along with his private academies (*shijuku* 私塾) which were among the most influential ones. Many students of Sorai’s academies started their own schools or became important figures in the schools back in their home domain.¹¹² Sorai provided many practical solutions to the problems of his time. He pointed at the *sankin kōtai* policy and the high consumption everywhere in the society as being the main causes of the impoverishment.¹¹³ To solve the problems, several solutions were put forward. The *sankin kōtai* should be drastically reduced from 6 months a year to 1 month or 100 days. By doing so, the samurai could be less dependent on the merchants and instead get everything they need from their home domain and would therefore ease the expenses of the daimyo and their vassals. It would also help to reduce extravagance.¹¹⁴ To help the economy of the bakufu, Sorai suggested a new type of taxation where artisans and daimyo should give goods directly to the bakufu and thus become less dependent on merchants. He also suggested that natural resources should be under direct control of the bakufu.¹¹⁵ It is uncertain if Sorai had any direct influence on the Kyōhō reform, but much of his thoughts are reflected there.

In the Kyōhō 享保 period (1716-1736), the eighth shogun, Yoshimune 吉宗 (tenure from 1716-1745), conducted a large scale reform known as the Kyōhō reform. The two major problems that Yoshimune made an effort to solve were the economical situation of the samurais who were overloaded by debt to merchants, and Edo’s vulnerability to fire because of its density in population.¹¹⁶ In order to solve the first problem, Yoshimune forbade merchants from using

¹¹¹ Ibid.: 345-46. Another factor to the *yonaoshi* riot in 1787 was people’s dissatisfaction with the rule of Senior Councillor (*rōjū* 老中) Tanuma Okitsugu who had been accused of corruption.

¹¹² Ibid.: 352

¹¹³ McEwan, 1969: 35

¹¹⁴ Ibid.: 58-59

¹¹⁵ Ibid.: 95

¹¹⁶ Totman 1993: 291-93

the bakufu court to claim their money from samurai who could not pay back their debt.¹¹⁷ To solve the second problem, a new kind of tile that could better resist fire was promoted, and efforts were made to make Edo less populated.¹¹⁸ With the purpose of reducing the density of houses in Edo and lessen the expenses of the daimyo, the *sankin kōtai* duty in Edo was reduced to half the time. Another measure to make daimyo use less money was the restriction of gift giving between daimyo and to the shogun. Daimyo were ordered to use only one third of the amount they had used until then on gifts to others, and one tenth on gifts to shogun. To help their own economical situation, the bakufu then imposed a new tax to daimyo with bigger fief than 10 000koku. 1% of the rice should be given to the bakufu, and because of the reduced gift giving and the shorter time of stay in Edo the daimyo should have had no problems paying the new tax.¹¹⁹ To hinder food shortages, Yoshimune promoted further cultivation and production of new agricultural products.¹²⁰ The result of the reform was better fiscal condition for the bakufu, daimyo, and lower retainers.¹²¹ However, new tax policies had made the situation for commoners, especially in rural areas, harder. The hardship suffered by the commoners resulted in increasing protests and social unrest. As we will see later, Buyō Inshi regards the Kyōhō reform as the beginning of the decline of the society and as the trigger to increasing greed and selfishness in the people.¹²²

In regards to learning and education, there were some developments from the 17th to the 18th century. In the 17th century, legitimizing the Tokugawa rule and justifying the privileges of the samurai had received much attention by scholars. The divine Tokugawa Ieyasu (Tōshōgū) and *tendō* rhetoric are examples of the scholarship trying to legitimize the rule by Tokugawa. Even though the rule was stable and recognized by most people, some scholars continued to present arguments that justified the regime. The privileges enjoyed by the samurai class were thoroughly justified in the 17th century and did not receive much attention by scholars any more.¹²³ Naturalizing Chinese thought and combining it with Japanese thought was often seen in

¹¹⁷ Ibid.: 296-97

¹¹⁸ Ibid.: 297

¹¹⁹ Ibid.: 298-300

¹²⁰ Ibid.: 311-313

¹²¹ Ibid.: 305

¹²² SKR: 410

¹²³ Totman 1993: 349-50

the works of scholars from the 17th century. The combination of Shinto and Confucianism was seen in texts from famous scholars like Hayashi Razan, Kumazawa Banzan, Yamazaki Ansai, and Yamaga Sokō etc. This trend continued to some degree in the 18th century. Kokugaku which grew in popularity in the 18th and 19th century criticized Chinese thought as being alien and incomparable to indigenous Japanese thought. By the 19th century, the naturalization process was being applied to European learning (Rangaku 蘭学), and not Chinese.¹²⁴ After European ships reappeared on the Japanese coast in the 1790s, Kokugaku and Mitogaku reacted and went from bookish traditions into giving compelling political messages.¹²⁵

How did these political and social circumstances influence Buyō Inshi? In the following parts of this chapter, I will inquire into the chapter called “*Nihon Shinkoku to ifu koto*” 日本神国といふ事 (“On Japan being a Divine Land”) from *Seji kenbunroku*. Here, we can get a glimpse not only into how the political and social circumstances influenced, or did not influence, Buyō, but also into Buyō’s view on Japan as a Divine Land.

Japan as Shinkoku and the decline of the golden age

In the chapter “On Japan being the Land of the Kami” in *Seji kenbunroku*, Buyō starts with summarizing what he heard about Japan being a divine country:

I have heard it said that Japan is a Divine Land and that in ancient times, the feelings of its people were clear and bright, without duplicity and never obscured by a single cloud or wisp of mist. Those times are thus called the Age of the Gods, and its people the people of antiquity. Today, the ways and feelings of the people of antiquity survive in distant mountains and hidden valleys where the people are illiterate and untouched by money. Among them there are neither “good” people nor “evil” people; none are poor and none are rich. (SKR: 399)

The purity of the people from antiquity was later destroyed by the introduction of foreign teachings. Because of Confucianism “the notion arose that for all things there is a particular moral obligation (*giri*), and that the idea of such obligations led to quarrels about priority and

¹²⁴ Ibid.: 351

¹²⁵ Ibid.: 456-57

status.”¹²⁶ The later introduction of Buddhism made people desire to “attain the status of a Buddha” and “people began to differentiate between self and other, and thus they shut out the pure and straight Way of the Kami.”¹²⁷ By the combination of “the moral obligations of Confucianism” and “the selfish desire of Buddhism ... the humors of the people (*jinki*) became polluted.”¹²⁸ The intention of the foreign teachings was to bring order to the realm. However:

“...because people both high and low fail to grasp the ultimate meanings of these Ways and instead use them for their own private ends, they all become evil teachings (*jahō*). But, even if one somehow gains a temporary benefit or obtains victory, because it will not be in accordance with that ultimate meaning and will be contrary to the will of Heaven (*tenmei*), in the end what was gained will be lost.” (SKR: 402-3)

Buyō regards Heaven to be above the other teachings. What is not done in accordance with the will of Heaven leads to punishment in one form or another.

The Martial Way and the Way of Heaven

The true essence of the people from antiquity was seen in the Japanese spirit, *yamato-damashii*, which was also interpreted as the origin of *budō*, the Martial Way:

Originally, it is said, the human feelings (*ninjō*) of our land were as fresh as the scent of cherry blossoms at sunrise. People responded directly to what they saw, and not even heavenly calamities or earthly disasters could upset them. This is called the Japanese spirit, *yamato-damashii*. Even in China they praised Japan as the “land of divine men” or as the “land of gentlemen” (*kunshi*). The spirit (*kishō*) of the martial Way of the present day derives from this Japanese spirit, although only traces of its outer form still remain vaguely recognizable today. Even though the people were endowed with such an awesome (*igen naru*) spirit, they became corrupted by those foreign teachings (*ihō*) (SKR: 403)

¹²⁶ SKR: 399

¹²⁷ SKR: 400

¹²⁸ Ibid.

Budō is seen as the most important Way, and one must act in accordance with it in order to rule and bring peace to the realm. If one does not devote oneself fully to the martial Way, one will act against the will of Heaven and the rule will never last:

In those centuries of chaos, military leaders had appeared throughout the land, some clever (*chishō*) and others stalwart. They were able to establish their authority for a period of time, but not in a manner true to the essence of the martial Way. Extravagant and greedy, they harmed the people, and because they treated the state as a private matter, their acts were not at one with the will of Heaven; quite to the contrary, they met with Heaven's wrath and remained unable to bring peace and order to the state. (SKR: 406)

Clever and stalwart as they may be, if the military generals lack the “essence of the martial Way” by being extravagant and greedy, they will receive Heaven's punishment. Buyō makes a clear contrast between the martial Way and selfishness like greed and extravagance.

Because of his sincere devotion to *budō*, Buyō regards Tokugawa Ieyasu as the greatest hero:

I speak of it with awe, but the most honorable Gongen-sama 権現様 (i.e., Tokugawa Ieyasu – tr.) always had faith in the Buddha Way, but he never allowed it to interfere with the Way of the bow and arrow or with government. On his deathbed he ordered Hikozaaka Kyūbei to fetch him a sword forged by Miike Tenta; this shows beyond any doubt that he had penetrated to the very essence of the martial Way and that Buddhism was only a transient matter for him that could never be equal to the military Way. (SKR: 405-6)

According to Buyō, even though Ieyasu personally was a believer in other Ways, he always regarded the martial Way as the highest.

Because of his devotion to the martial Way, Tokugawa Ieyasu managed to revive the Japanese spirit that had once been lost:

The Divine Lord [Ieyasu], I am awed to say, did attain the true essence of the martial Way, and for that reason his acts accorded as well with both the Confucian and the Buddhist Way. He concentrated all his efforts on enabling the people to live in peace and security and showed compassion to widows, orphans, and others without means of support. His conduct was at one

with the will of Heaven, and he restored what had become a land of thieves to its rightful place as a land of gentlemen and revived the Japanese spirit that had long been obscured. (SKR: 406-7)

After Ieyasu had revived the Japanese spirit, magnanimous and virtuous men increased as never before seen in history. All of these were men of benevolent virtue who sincerely followed the martial Way.¹²⁹ The Japanese spirit that Ieyasu revived by his conduct following the true essence of *budō* did, however, perished again after some time. It was in the Genroku period (1688-1704) that the first changes started to be seen and after the Kyōhō reform the government started for the first time to “adapt institutions based on profit”¹³⁰ and “books written by Confucian scholars of the time revile the bakufu for carrying out profit-based governmental measures unheard of up to this period.”¹³¹ After that greed and poverty increased steadily and the true Japanese spirit was again lost. The view of the Genroku period as marking the time when the decline started is based on Ogyū Sorai’s view.¹³²

The previous excerpt also shows Buyō’s view on the Way of Heaven as the ultimate Way above the other Ways, and how only the martial Way was in accordance with the Way of Heaven. Following the martial Way, Ieyasu’s effort led to peace and prosperity. By attaining the essence of the martial Way, one will also naturally act in accordance with the Confucian and the Buddhist Way.

The Way of Heaven is seen as absolute. Even Ieyasu could be punished by Heaven had he not followed the fundamental principles of governing the realm:

Regarding the confiscation of the holdings of Fukushima Masanori,¹³³ I have heard that Lord Gongen [Ieyasu] stated in his testament that although Masanori had been loyal to him, in the administration of his domain (*ryōkoku*) he had indulged in arrogant extravagance, and mistreated the country people. Suffering from tyrannical government (*gyakusei*), the people of the domain, were as if drowning or consumed by fire. To leave him in place would be contrary to the

¹²⁹ SKR: 407. Interestingly, among one of the ten virtuous men Buyō mentions Hoshina Masayuki who has been suggested by Totman to have been the person responsible for banishing Yamaga Sokō. See footnote 72.

¹³⁰ SKR: 409

¹³¹ SKR: 410

¹³² McEwan, 1969: 42

¹³³ Fukushima Masanori 福島正則 (1561-1624) was a military general from Hiroshima who originally served Toyotomi Hideyoshi. In the battle of Sekigahara in 1600, he joined forces with Tokugawa. Later, he lost his fief because he repaired the Hiroshima castle without permission from the bakufu. (Source: *Kōjien*)

fundamental principles of governing the realm and make Lord Gongen himself subject to the condemnation of Heaven. (SKR: 421)

This argumentation is very similar to that seen in *tendō* rhetoric from the 17th century. For instance, the understanding that Heaven can punish anyone, even Ieyasu, is common in *tendō* rhetoric.¹³⁴ It also shows how extravagance is regarded as evil as well as the appropriate way of punishing the violators by confiscating their holdings.

Even though Heaven shows justice and punishes the evildoers according to their sins, it is important for human beings to not be dependent on the Way of Heaven:

The human Way cannot simply be left up to the Way of heaven or the Way of the buddhas. Everything depends on keeping control. The Way of heaven shines on eras of turmoil as well as order. People commit the enormous crimes of assassinating their lords or murdering their parents and brothers in full view of the light of the sun and moon, and yet these do not cloud over. Since they just let things go as is, they are hardly dependable. The same goes for the buddhas and the kami. (SKR: 427-28)

Heaven, as well as the buddhas and the kami, eventually punish people who commit crimes, but they fail to prevent people from doing the crimes. Therefore, it is important for human beings to have control.

One should not accept that people will receive the punishment of Heaven but instead prevent people from becoming evil:

It is true that those who do evil may soon be defeated and those who indulge in excessive extravagance meet with disaster or fall ill and see their lives shortened. This may appear to be ... Heaven's punishment (*tenbatsu*), but since it is coming after the evil already has been done, such punishment is useless; it is as much as making people into evil doers and then punishing them. Is not the true Way of Heaven, of the buddhas and kami to lead people to the ultimate good (*shizen*) before they become evildoers who do something bad? If those ways cannot do that, they are of no use whatsoever. Clearly the sun and the moon and the spirits, too, cannot overcome selfish human desire. Since it is said that the buddhas and kami cannot control human action and people cannot

¹³⁴ Ooms, 1985: 67

follow the intentions of the buddhas and kami, it is all the more certain that only human beings can govern human beings. (SKR: 428-29)

The true meaning of the Way of Heaven, as well as the way of the buddhas and the kami, is to guide the people into becoming good. This can only be achieved by the governing of human beings.

The way to govern is suggested to be through military rule consisting of rewards and punishments. Then on behalf of Heaven, the ruler should rid the world of evils like of greed and extravagance:

The ruler of the state should himself establish a strict system for rewarding good and punishing evil, acting on behalf of Heaven and before Heaven does, on behalf of the deities and buddhas and before the deities and buddhas do, thereby ensuring that the people of the world do good and receive all blessings. (SKR: 429)

The ruler should act in place of Heaven and establish institutions (*seido*) ... and he likewise should adopt methods of governance and instruction (*seikyō*) that will make it difficult for people to do evil deeds and thereby keep them from becoming evildoers. To be sure it is not an easy thing to act before Heaven does and in place of Heaven. To adopt methods of governance and instruction that are truly in accord with the Way of Heaven and that realize Heavenly virtue, it will not do to act as if one were relying on the buddhas and deities and praying for their assistance. ... One must carry out government using the martial Way fundamental to the Japanese spirit. Whether one stirs up unrest or succeeds in establishing order all depends on one's use of the martial Way. If one establishes institutions and adopts methods of governance and instruction that accord with the true intent of the martial Way, the people of the world will enjoy peace and freedom (*jizai jiyū*). (SKR: 430)

In order to prevent people from becoming evildoers, it is necessary for the ruler to govern in accordance with and in the place of Heaven by the means of the “martial Way fundamental to the Japanese spirit.” The suggestion to establish institutions *seido* 制度 is a central point in Ogyū

Sorai's writings. Sorai used the term *seido* in the sense of sumptuary regulations as a means to restrain the high consumption which he saw as the origin of the poverty in Edo.¹³⁵

If the evils were to become too serious and widespread Heaven can also punish a whole country if the:

Heaven's punishment is something immense; it may extend to one's own person, to one's house, to the domain, or to the entire realm and state. When the entire realm and state becomes fraught with wrongdoing, Heaven's punishment will extend to the entirety. (SKR: 431)

When Heaven's anger is so strong that its punishment extends to the entire realm and state, it is not possible to restore order through bravery and valor. Even great generals (*ryōshō*) endowed with both talent and virtue find it difficult to restore order. Although it is presumptuous for me to speak of it, as I said earlier, the Divine Lord's actions accorded completely with Heaven's mandate, and because he raised up valorous leaders who also behaved in accordance with Heaven's Way and had them fulfill Heavenly virtue, Heaven's anger was ameliorated, and the deities and buddhas also offered their protection. (SKR: 432)

When Heavens wrath affects the whole country, it is extremely difficult to reinstate order. Therefore, preventing people from becoming evil is not only for the sake of individuals, but for wellbeing of the whole realm. This must be done by establishing institutions and adopt methods of "governance and instruction that accord with the true intent of the martial Way."

Central for Buyō's ideas is the notion that the Way of Heaven is the ultimate authority. In order to act according to the will of Heaven the martial Way should be strictly followed. The person most successful in conducting the will of Heaven is thought to be Ieyasu. However, should he not follow the Way of Heaven, his mandate would be lost and he would receive Heavens punishment. Buyō also uses the Way of Heaven and the golden age when Ieyasu ruled to criticize the current bakufu. For instance, Buyō explains that the crimes and poverty in the society have increased due to the current governments "soft" rule. Buyō mentions that he has heard that ever since the foreign teachings arrived in Japan, the social order started to decline, the rulers could not rule in a proper manner, and regimes changed within short time after their establishments, yet he does not make it an important point. The most important reason for the

¹³⁵ McEwans, 1969: 38-39

decline of the social order is the greed and selfishness that polluted the people and the government's failure to govern following the martial Way.

Typical for the third stage of the Bukoku concept, as mentioned in Chapter 3, was the despair with the bad state of the *bu* of that time. The Western powers proved the comparatively weak military and martial abilities of Japan. The cause of the decline of the true *bu* was often thought to be rooted in the long period of peace. Many scholars promoted to revive the original *bu* from old times in order to create a strong military that would be capable of opposing the powers from the West. In Buyō's account we can see a similar despair of the current state of the *bu*. He often reflects on stories from the past where the true *bu* was still present. For instance, Ieyasu's pacification of the realm which was done in accordance with the martial Way and the 47 *rōnin*'s vendetta¹³⁶ which showed the true loyalty of samurai following the martial Way are highly regarded by Buyō.¹³⁷ The reason for the decline of the real martial Way was not related to the long period of peace, but to the increasing greed and extravagance among the people. Buyō has nothing to comment on the threat from the West that had been a topic of discussion for his contemporary intellectuals. However, he does mention *yamato-damashii* which was popular among Kōkoku followers, especially Kokugaku and Mitogaku scholars. On the contrary to Kokugaku and Mitogaku, Buyō's interpretation is distinguished by the understanding of a Japanese spirit that has no relation with the kami or the emperor. Instead, the Japanese spirit was expressed in the martial Way.

Buyō's focus on *tendō* has strikingly many similarities with *Tōshōgū Goikun*¹³⁸ from the middle of the 17th century. For instance, the importance of *budō* to remove the evils of society, and *budō*'s accordance with the Way of Heaven are seen in both Buyō's account and *Tōshōgū Goikun*.¹³⁹ This might suggest that the *tendō* rhetoric that was a popular means of justifying the Tokugawa rule in the 17th century still was vivid in the minds of people (or at least one proportion of people) in the early 19th century. Another factor supporting this suggestion is

¹³⁶ The 47 *rōnin* have been thought to be students of Yamaga's Heigaku School in Akō. Even though Yamaga Sokō had been dead for about 18 years before the vendetta, his teachings were often blamed, or praised, for the crime the 47 *rōnin* committed.

¹³⁷ SKR: 407

¹³⁸ See the last part of Chapter 4 for more about *Tōshōgū Goikun*

¹³⁹ Ooms, 1985: 67-68

Buyō's mentioning of a popular *tendō* work written in the 17th century. Buyō praises Honda Masanobu's 本多正信¹⁴⁰ (1538-1616) *Honsaroku* 本佐録 ("Records of Honda Sada-no-kami Masanobu") for being close to hit the mark on how to govern the country.¹⁴¹ *Honsaroku* explains the principles of the Way of Heaven and gives suggestions on how to successfully govern the realm.¹⁴² According to Buyō, none of his other contemporary Confucian scholars could compare with Honda Masanobu.¹⁴³

Buyō compared with Hirata Atsutane

To give a picture of how Buyō distinguished himself from other more prestigious contemporary scholars, I will compare him with the Kokugaku scholar Hirata Atsutane. The reason for choosing Atsutane is because: first, he lived around the same time as Buyō, and second, Atsutane's Kokugaku School is considered to have had the strongest influence on others and was the dominant school with most students in the 19th century.¹⁴⁴ As mentioned briefly in Chapter 3, Atsutane's Kokugaku gave influence to the *sonnō jōi* movement. Atsutane's interpretation on the Japanese spirit was closely related to this movement. He believed that by dying for the emperor their souls would be rewarded after death.¹⁴⁵ For Buyō, the Japanese spirit had little to do with the emperor. Instead the uprightness of people from antiquity and the martial Way are more important. Foreign teachings from the mainland were seen as a source of pollution to the original Japanese Way by Buyō. Atsutane also regarded Japanese teachings to be of more importance than any foreign teachings and criticized Chinese and Buddhist teachings. For instance, as pointed out by Flueckiger, Atsutane regarded Confucianism as a "corrupting force" that "disrupted the peacefulness of ancient Japan and the honest simplicity of the ancient Japanese."¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁰ Honda Masanobu was a daimyo and was employed as a strategist for Ieyasu. (Source: *Nihon Kokugo Daijiten*)

¹⁴¹ SKR: 434

¹⁴² SJT: 71

¹⁴³ SKR: 434

¹⁴⁴ Totman: 462, McNalley: 210

¹⁴⁵ Kasulis, Thomas P, *Shinto – a way home*, University of Hawaii Press, 2004, p. 129

¹⁴⁶ Flueckiger, 2008, p. 233

The understanding of Confucianism as an evil element that spoiled the good nature of the old way of Japan is common for the two. However, Atsutane did use parts of foreign teachings, especially Western teachings (Rangaku 蘭学), to support his own theories when it was possible.¹⁴⁷ Atsutane also promoted western learning and science if it could be of use for the people of Japan.¹⁴⁸ In that sense, Atsutane was more flexible than Buyō. On Japan as the Land of the kami, Atsutane explains:

People all over the world refer to Japan as the Land of the Gods and call us the descendants of the gods. ...It was the gods who formed all the lands of the world at the Creation, and these gods were, without exception, born in Japan. Japan is thus the homeland of the gods, and that is why we call it the Land of the Gods. This is a matter of universal belief and quite beyond dispute. (SJT: 512, excerpt taken from *Kōdō taii*, in *Hirata Atsutane zenshū*, vol 1, pp. 22-23)

Buyō has not given much attention to the matters regarding the Japanese people as being descendents from the kami and the kami creating the world. He just mentions that he has heard that Japan is the Land of the Kami, but does not give his own opinion on it. The religious object of importance for Buyō is Heaven, rather than kami.

One interesting similarity is that Atsutane also gives *bu* some importance. In *Daidō wakumon* 大道或問 he claims that “the substance of the Imperial Country (Kōkoku) derives from *bu*. It is in the power of nature.”¹⁴⁹ Following this statement Atsutane summarizes the myth about Izanagi and Izanami creating Japan by the Heavenly Jeweled Halberd, Ama-no-nuhoko. This example shows how ideas from the Bukoku discourse have been borrowed by a Kōkoku follower and applied to his view.

¹⁴⁷ Keene, Donald, *Hirata Atsutane and Western Learning*, p. 356.

¹⁴⁸ SJT: 510-11

¹⁴⁹ Maeda: 109

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The senses of cultural identity found in Shinkoku, Kōkoku, and Bukoku thoughts are not always distinguished from each other, but overlap and borrow elements from each other occasionally. We have seen this by analyzing works from Yamaga Sokō and Buyō Inshi, and it was further demonstrated by the brief comparison of Buyō and the Kokugaku scholar Hirata Atsutane. The figure below shows roughly the typical characteristics of Bukoku and Kōkoku thought:

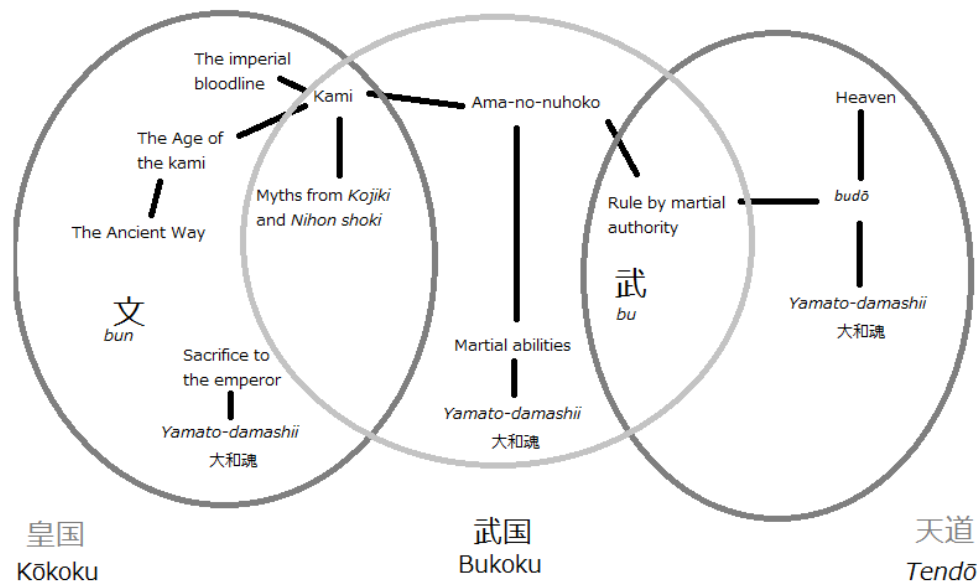


Figure: Kōkoku, Bukoku, and Tendō

Compared to Sokō and other Kōkoku followers, Buyō scarcely displays an interest in Shinto and the old myths. He criticizes the Shinto priests and Buddhist monks for being arrogant and extravagant.¹⁵⁰ Furthermore, Buyō has a much more pessimistic view on Japanese history. Good times are minimal in comparison with the bad times. Before Ieyasu pacified Japan, the ruling regimes changed within short time after their establishments, due to the leaders' selfishness and inability to follow the martial Way fully. Sokō, on the other hand, mentions that "some sharp tongues and long claws made it on to the stage," yet the warrior rulers still always respected the

¹⁵⁰ SKR: 411

imperial court, and the shogun was appointed by the emperor. Simply a few negligible, but critical, mentions of the emperor and the imperial court appear in Buyō's work. Sokō's view on the emperor as the superior authority is typical that of the Kōkoku discourse. However, the arguments for imperial superiority are often mixed with elements of Bukoku thought. Although we may be able to detect some echoes of ideas often represented by Kōkoku thinkers, for instance, the Japanese spirit, Buyō interprets it in a new way where he puts emphasis on *budō* while not even mentioning the emperor or kami.

Bukoku and Kōkoku have often borrowed elements from each other. Sokō is a good example of the scholars who merge elements from the two discourses. Sokō's account contains the standard Kōkoku argument about the uninterrupted imperial bloodline, but simultaneously it borrows elements from typical Bukoku thought. The elements are: the fact that Japan never was successfully conquered by foreigners, the emphasis on the importance of *bu* in governing and pacifying the realm, and the symbol of Izanagi and Izanami's jeweled halberd, Ama-no-nuhoko, along with his own creative interpretation of Amaterasu as a warrior goddess. Sokō's argument on Ama-no-nuhoko has been seen as representative for the conceptualization of the Bukoku discourse.¹⁵¹ Sokō also showed how the kami deliberately instructed the importance of *bu* to the people. Consequently, if we were to classify Sokō as either a Bukoku or Kōkoku thinker, we would have to place him in both.

Buyō's view on martial authority as a necessary means to govern the country is a typical argument of Bukoku followers. However, he pays more attention to the Way of Heaven than to the legends from *Nihon Shoki* and *Kojiki*. In the light of Anthony Smith's theory on myths and cultural identity, we can find that Buyō's account is distinguished as the cultural-ideological myths that try to trace cultural affinity with ancestors from a "golden age". Buyō mentions the Age of the kami which declined due to the introduction of foreign teachings from the mainland, but this period is not of great importance to him. The true "golden age" for Buyō was the first century of the Tokugawa rule after Ieyasu had revived the *yamato-damashii* by pacifying the realm in accordance with the will of Heaven and with sincerity to the martial Way. However, this stage also declined after the martial Way was weakened and the evil people and greed increased.

¹⁵¹ Maeda 1997: 233-34

Buyō also hopes to revive the true Japanese Way which for him was the Ieyasu Way. Buyō calls for an attack by force (*kōgeki* 攻撃) on the evildoers and those who do not obey the laws issued by the bakufu, and in that manner he dreams of restoring the world to order by the martial Way which had secured order in the beginning.¹⁵² Smith's explanation that the golden age declined because "old virtues were forgotten, moral decay set in, pleasure and vice overcame discipline and self-sacrifice" is highly applicable to Buyō's account on the Japanese spirit and *budō*. The myths of importance, however, are not those from *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki*, but the story of Ieyasu and his virtuous rule in accordance with the martial Way. On this point Buyō's ideas deviate from the typical Bukoku concept where the Heavenly jeweled halberd, Ama-no-nuhoko, was essential to explain why Japan was always ruled by *bu*. In Buyō's account the kami and the halberd are not mentioned, but the origin to the rule by *bu*, which was perfected by Ieyasu, traces back to the Way of Heaven.

The elements found in Yamaga Sokō's account share many similarities with Smith's description of genealogical ancestry based on filiation. The definition being that the community is seen as privileged and superior because of the lineage with a hero, founder, or deity is very similar to Sokō's notion of that Japan is a superior country because of the uninterrupted imperial bloodline tracing back to the kami.

Through this study we have examined a 17th century scholar promoting Kōkoku ideas in a time when we would expect *tendō* rhetoric and a 19th century samurai's *tendō* rhetoric in a time when emperor centered views were increasing. Yamaga Sokō promoted the emperor in a similar manner as scholars several decades after him would do. Buyō Inshi spoke of the Way of Heaven and the indispensability of ruling by the martial Way which is parallel to the rhetoric of the 17th century. This indicates that there were more intellectual layers in the Edo period with more diversification than what have usually received attention in modern secondary sources. One possible reason for the lack of research on Buyō Inshi's idea until recent years might be because the *tendō* rhetoric that he speaks of had little to contribute to the post-Meiji Restoration government which tried to make an ideology for the whole country. Yamaga Sokō, on the other

¹⁵² SKR: 433

hand, has been praised in *Kokutai no hongī*¹⁵³ as a person succeeding in bushido and having a similar spirit as the Meiji revolutionists:

“...Yamaga Sokō’s *Chūchō Jijitsu*... emphasized the great honor of revering the emperor (尊王の大義) and along with other texts written by foreign country scholars those were the texts that gave great influence to the imperialistic patriots (勤皇の志士) of the *bakumatsu*.”¹⁵⁴

“Yamaga Sokō, Matsumiya Kanza, and Yoshida Shōin all were men of the most devout character, who exercised much influence in bringing Bushido to perfection. It is this same Bushido that shed an outdated feudalism at the time of the Meiji Restoration, increased in splendor, became the Way of loyalty and patriotism, and evolved before us as the spirit of the imperial forces.” (SJT: 973)

Probably, Sokō’s praise of the emperor at the same time as he emphasised the importance of the martial values might have been quite attractive for the post-Meiji government to use.

¹⁵³ 国体の本義. *Kokutai no Hongi* (Essentials of our national polity) was a 156 page pamphlet published in March 1937 by the Ministry of Education with the purpose of establishing an orthodox interpretation of the national essence (*kokutai*) of Japan. This was because there were already many different interpretations of what the *kokutai* was and nationalism was increasing and the government saw the need for a standard understanding of the ideology.

Source: Primary Source Document with Questions (DBQs) on *SELECTIONS FROM THE KOKUTAI NO HONGI* (FUNDAMENTALS OF OUR NATIONAL POLITY), Asia for Educators | Columbia University, <http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/japan/kokutai.pdf>

¹⁵⁴ *Kokutai no Hongi*: <http://www.j-texts.com/showa/kokutaiah.html>

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